

University of Massachusetts Amherst ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst

Doctoral Dissertations 1896 - February 2014

2-2009

It'S 'A Good Thing': The Commodification Of Femininity, Affluence, And Whiteness In The Martha Stewart Phenomenon

Melissa A Click

University of Massachusetts - Amherst

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), and the [Mass Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Click, Melissa A, "It'S 'A Good Thing': The Commodification Of Femininity, Affluence, And Whiteness In The Martha Stewart Phenomenon" (2009). *Doctoral Dissertations 1896 - February 2014*. 42.

https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1/42

This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations 1896 - February 2014 by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

IT'S 'A GOOD THING':
THE COMMODIFICATION OF FEMININITY, AFFLUENCE, AND WHITENESS
IN THE MARTHA STEWART PHENOMENON

A Dissertation Presented

by

MELISSA A. CLICK

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 2009

Communication

© Copyright by Melissa A. Click 2009

All Rights Reserved

IT'S 'A GOOD THING':
THE COMMODIFICATION OF FEMININITY, AFFLUENCE, AND WHITENESS
IN THE MARTHA STEWART PHENOMENON

A Dissertation Presented

by

MELISSA A. CLICK

Approved as to style and content by:

Carolyn Anderson, Chair

Lisa Henderson, Member

Marta Calás, Member

Jan Servaes, Department Head
Communication

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has been many years in the making and is the result of the support, guidance and generosity of many invaluable people.

Carolyn Anderson has been endlessly helpful through this process, giving me priceless guidance and patient support. Her comments were always right on, and her advice to “keep rolling” kept me going. I could always count on Carolyn to tuck a funny comic strip or comment about Martha Stewart in the middle of her suggestions for revision; I always found it right when I needed a laugh. Carolyn, thank you for making my work stronger and for making me a better scholar.

Committee members Lisa Henderson and Marta Calás offered unwavering support and rich feedback. Barbara Cruikshank, Sut Jhally, Justin Lewis, Michael Morgan, and Kathy Peiss contributed to my intellectual development and gave me many of the tools I needed to think through the issues raised in this dissertation.

I was absolutely blessed to have had such a wonderful community of up-and-coming scholars with whom to develop ideas. James Allan, Andreas Correa, Esteban del Rio, Vincent Doyle, Alicia Kemmitt, Katie LeBesco, Kembrew McLeod, Saila Poutiainen, and Katherine Sender inspired me and kept me going. Maureen Gray, Kendra Olson Hodgson, and Ronit Ridberg helped me forget about grad school, when appropriate.

The dedicated Communication staff offered me much help through the course of my graduate studies. Thanks to Susan Dreyer, Debbie Madigan, Kathy Ready, April Tidlund, and Pearl Simanski for helping me navigate the UMass bureaucracy.

I am deeply indebted to the women and men who took time out of their busy schedules to come talk about Martha Stewart with a woman they had never met—your experiences added incredible depth to this project. Sandra Furey-Gaither, Barbie Greppin, and Sheba Ratzkoff helped me find people to interview, and the American Institutes for Research, Debbie Callahan, Nina Huntemann, the Media Education Foundation, Brad Seawell, and the University of Massachusetts gave me quiet, private locations to hold my interviews. The Department of Communication at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst provided recording equipment and funded many of the expenses incurred as I traveled to interview members of Martha Stewart’s audience.

My colleagues in the Department of Communication at the University of Missouri, Columbia provided much-needed support and the promise of a tiara when I finished. Much thanks to Jennifer Stevens Aubrey, Lissa Behm-Morawitz, Loreen Olson, and Rebecca Meisenbach. Kathy Denker, Sacheen Mobely, and Leslie Rill regularly cheered me on and Michael Kramer’s regular inquiries applied necessary pressure. Thanks also to Cathy Illingworth, who always had a FedEx box when I needed one.

Thanks to my parents, Gary and Carole Click for teaching me to value education and for enduring endless conversations about my dissertation. My brother Felix patiently waited through months of silence while I wrote; he is also really great at using tab leaders. Thanks to my amazing son Trey, who let Mommy go to work without too much fuss (and thanks to Johanna Oldham for being so wonderful with Trey—it made it ok for me to leave). Chip Callahan and Nina Huntemann have been tirelessly supportive through this whole process—I couldn’t have done this without either one of you and certainly wouldn’t have wanted to try!

ABSTRACT

IT'S 'A GOOD THING': THE COMMODIFICATION OF FEMININITY, AFFLUENCE, AND WHITENESS IN THE MARTHA STEWART PHENOMENON

FEBRUARY 2009

MELISSA A. CLICK, B.B.A., JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

M.A., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

Directed by: Carolyn Anderson

This study examines the ideologies of gender, race, and class present in Martha Stewart's unprecedented popularity, beginning with the publication of Stewart's first magazine in 1990 and ending in September 2004, after Stewart's conviction for her involvement in the ImClone scandal. My approach is built on the intersection of American mass communication research, British cultural studies, and feminist theory, and utilizes Hall's Encoding/Decoding model to examine how social, cultural and political discourses circulate in and through a mediated text and how those meanings are interpreted by those who receive them. Drawing from textual and ideological analysis of over thirteen years of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine and twelve weeks of Stewart's four television programs, I investigate the ways in which the mode of address in Stewart's media texts positions her simultaneously as a close friend and respected teacher. As the model for "living" in her media texts, Stewart uses these modes of address as the foundation of her messages about women's roles, racial and ethnic traditions, and social mobility. To understand how readers and viewers make sense of these messages, I conducted focus group interviews with thirty-eight fans of *Martha*

Stewart Living between October 2002 and July 2004. Two distinct types of fans emerged as my interviews progressed, and the participants, who have a range of different gender, race, sexuality and class identifications, expressed a variety of positions on the messages about gender roles, racial representations, and class aspiration they observed in Stewart's texts. I was uniquely positioned to examine how fans' feelings about Martha Stewart and *Martha Stewart Living* changed when Stewart was indicted, convicted and sentenced to prison because of her sale of ImClone stock; as a result of my observations, I argue that scholars should take a closer look at how fan practices and beliefs function in fans' lives and in the larger culture. In total, this examination of Martha Stewart's media texts and audience members offers a rich account of the ways in which discourses of gender, race, and class influenced American culture at the turn of the twenty-first century.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT.....	vi
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose and Scope	3
Stewart's Predecessors	6
Martha Stewart and MSLO	12
The Exemplary Life	14
The Voice of the Expert	15
Elite Taste	16
Similarity to Predecessors	25
Trouble in Paradise	27
Preview of Chapters	33
2. THEORIES AND METHODS	37
Introduction.....	37
Theories.....	37
American Mass Communication Research	37
Dewey and the Industrial Revolution	38
Lippman and the Rise of Social Science.....	40
Lazarsfeld and Limited Effects	44
British Cultural Studies	47
The Foundations of British Cultural Studies	48
Reception Studies.....	54
Feminist Theory and Research.....	57
The Foundations of Feminist Research.....	58
Feminist Research in Communication	62
Methods.....	65
Rationale for Textual and Ideological Analysis.....	65
Textual and Ideological Analysis.....	67
Rationale for Reception Studies.....	71
Reception Studies.....	73
Conclusion	78

3. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF <i>MARTHA STEWART LIVING</i>	80
Introduction	80
Para-social Martha	80
Remembering	87
Martha's Calendar	88
askMartha	89
Para-social Interaction in the Production Techniques of <i>Martha Stewart Living</i>	90
Teacherly Martha	94
101s	99
Field Trips	101
Step-by-step Directions, Checklists, and Workbooks	102
Martha's Calendar	106
What to Have for Dinner	108
Arcane Historical Details	109
Guest Experts	113
Gender, Work and Domesticity	116
Women's Work	124
It's a Good Thing	129
Reinventing Housework	134
Reclaiming Women's Lost Knowledge	138
"Living" Happens at Home	140
Perfectly Manipulative	145
Conclusion	149
Race and Ethnicity	151
Whiteness	153
Heritage	163
Religion	176
Conclusion	181
Taste and Class	181
Comparing Stewart's Childhood and Adulthood	183
Teaching the Lesser Classes	192
Luxury and Fantasy	198
Time, Space, and Money	204
Collecting	207
Modest, Do-it-yourself, and New-from-old Projects	211
Conclusion	218
Conclusion	219
4. RECEPTION STUDY OF MARTHA STEWART'S FANS	226
Introduction	226
Martha Stewart <i>Fans</i> ?	226
<i>Living</i> Fans	229
Martha Fans	238

Gender: Femininity, Domesticity, and Women's Roles	247
Sexuality	265
Race: Whiteness and Ethnicity	273
Class: Identity and Aspiration.....	285
ImClone.....	301
Conclusion	309
 5. CONCLUSION.....	 314
Summary of Findings.....	315
Implications and Contributions.....	319
Limitations and Future Directions	324
ImClone and Beyond	326
Stewart After ImClone.....	329
 APPENDICES	
A. BASIC STRUCTURE OF <i>MARTHA STEWART LIVING</i> MAGAZINE	341
B. BASIC STRUCTURE OF A <i>MARTHA STEWART LIVING</i> EPISODE...	344
C. PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS	348
D. PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTIONS	350
E. SMALL GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE	359
F. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	363
G. TELEVISION SEGMENTS FROM <i>MARTHA STEWART LIVING</i> SCREENED IN INTERVIEWS	366
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 371

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

When this project began in 2002, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia was a \$295 million a year business (Carr, 2003, p. C5). As the highly visible focal point of her media texts, known to fans simply as “Martha,” Stewart had built an incredibly successful business based on her own good taste. Fans could consume Stewart’s advice for living through a number of formats—books, magazines, television, radio, newspaper and the World Wide Web, all of which carried nearly identical messages.¹ Stewart’s lifestyle advice drew a huge audience; by 2002, Martha Stewart had sold more than 10 million copies of her more than 34 books and the combined readership of Stewart’s magazines was 10 million readers (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 398). Stewart’s daily television programs drew 1.67 million viewers (Fine & Friedman, 2003, p. 1). Her Kmart line included 5,000 products and earned \$1.6 million in sales in 2001 (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 398). In 2002, Martha Stewart was without question a savvy businesswoman who had successfully constructed a public personality as a trusted advisor who strived for perfection and promoted impeccable taste.

As a result of Stewart’s visibility as an expert in matters of taste, a perfectionist in the home, and a successful businesswoman, her image was repeatedly critiqued in US popular culture. Many of these criticisms were reactions to the ways in which Martha Stewart’s subject matter in her media texts (images of domestic perfection), when combined with her public persona (a divorcee with seemingly strained personal relationships), confused gender norms, and promoted White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) culture. Furthermore, critiques targeted the fact that Stewart’s media texts were

designed for women who work in their homes, while Stewart, as one of the most powerful businesswomen in the US, had very little time to lead the domestic life she detailed.

Also at issue in popular critiques of Stewart was her persona: she was often ridiculed for being elitist, cold, obsessive and aggressive. In many instances, it is hard to separate the ridicule of the domestic from the ridicule of Stewart. It seems that Stewart is a target because she takes the domestic so seriously and has been wildly successful at projecting herself as expert. Most commonly, TV programs, tabloids, political cartoons, jokes, and email forwards position Stewart as a fraud to be exposed, and a wrong to be righted. Popular critiques of Stewart hinted at or aimed to demonstrate that her public persona was only a façade, and behind that façade was an entirely different person. However, in early 2002, none of the reports about Stewart's alleged imperfections were weighty enough to topple her image as a know-it-all good girl.

It is this tension between Stewart's construction as a domestic expert and the popular press's attempt to construct Stewart as a fraud that makes for rich analysis. This tension was increased by two events in 2002: first, the publication in April of the unauthorized biography *Martha Inc.* by Christopher Byron, and second, the allegations in June that Stewart improperly traded her shares of ImClone stock in December of 2001. These events fractured Stewart's seemingly spotless image and drew disparaging media attention. As Nancy Shaw (2003) suggests, Stewart's public persona played a significant role in the media's treatment of Stewart's troubles: "because she peddles perfection, when she screws up she is all the more attractive as a target of ridicule" (p. 57). Complicating matters, Stewart's indictment, trial and conviction coexisted with a number

of corporate scandals at Enron, Tyco, WorldCom, Adelphia Cable and Global Crossing. These arguably more egregious cases drew much less media attention and, as Carol Stabile (2004) found, far fewer mean-spirited accounts: “The language used to describe Stewart’s demise manifests a spiteful gleefulness—a tone strikingly absent from coverage of [the individuals at the center of other corporate scandals]” (p. 324).

The prominence of Stewart’s legal troubles in the media impacted MSLO and my analysis of her media texts; in August 2004, her television programs were canceled and her mail order catalog was shut down and her presence in her magazines was largely erased in September 2004. The public debate over the fairness of Stewart’s treatment (both in the courtroom and in the media) changed the discussions I had in my focus groups: discussion of Stewart’s media texts took a back seat and my project shifted to an examination of the media coverage of the events that tarnished Stewart’s image and an exploration of the positions people took to explain Stewart’s indictment and conviction. Though I had not intended to capture Stewart in the midst of a scandal, doing so meant I could watch Stewart’s fans respond to the scandal and monitor the changes in Stewart’s texts as the ImClone scandal unfolded.

Purpose and Scope

Charlotte Brunsdon argues in her book *Screen Tastes* (1997) that media texts associated with the feminine and the domestic often are overlooked by mainstream and, sometimes, feminist scholars who do not take the texts seriously and do not want their work to be associated with them in part because the pleasures associated with these texts are seen to be “politically regressive” (p. 40). Brunsdon laments that “what women and girls like is somehow *worse* than the equivalent masculine pleasures” (p. 2). I believe

Martha Stewart, and domesticity in general, have suffered from a lack of critical attention in academia for the reasons Brunsdon outlines and hope that my project will draw attention to the importance of studying media texts focused on domestic instruction for a mostly female audience.

In her germinal book, *From Catharine Beecher to Martha Stewart: A Cultural History of Domestic Advice*, Sarah Leavitt (2002) emphasizes that the images and ideals constructed by domestic advisors contain rich evidence of the ideologies that the members of a particular culture, in this case particularly women, grappled with at a particular cultural moment:

Just like advertisements, domestic advice works as a kind of fun-house mirror, distorting reality to show a society as some people wish it could be. But most of the advice was never followed. The writings of domestic advisors demonstrate cultural ideals, not cultural realities. ... these rich sources illustrate the ways in which cultural ideals could be embedded in household furnishings and ornamentation. Domestic-advice manuals have always been the stuff of fantasy. Their historical value lies in uncovering the way certain women understood the connections between their homes and the larger world (p. 5).

Tying Brunsdon's and Leavitt's work together, I aimed in this dissertation to carefully examine the ideals and fantasies present in Martha Stewart's magazines, television programs, website and articulated by Stewart's fans in order to more fully understand the cultural moment in which they became popular.

In the course of this project, I examined the foundational elements of *Martha Stewart Living* in its many forms to uncover the discourses of gender, race and class in Martha Stewart's extraordinarily popular texts, specifically from the publication of Stewart's first magazine (Winter 1990) through Stewart's conviction and sentencing in the ImClone scandal (August 2004); I additionally studied a diverse group of Stewart's fans to understand their interpretations of these texts. My approach is built on the

intersection of American mass communication research, British cultural studies, and feminist theory, and focuses on two distinct areas: the texts and the fans of *Martha Stewart Living*. To study Stewart's texts, I analyzed more than thirteen years of Stewart's flagship magazine, twelve weeks of Stewart's four television programs, and numerous versions of Stewart's website. With each I conducted a close textual analysis, looking for the text's foundational codes and ideologies. To study Stewart's fans, I conducted eight focus group interviews between October 2002 and July 2004. In total, I interviewed thirty-eight participants with a range of different gender, race, sexuality and class identifications. Each of the interviews was transcribed and analyzed with the goal of illuminating the similarities and differences in the replies of each of the group's members.

The research questions that guided my analysis are:

1. With what mode of address does Stewart speak to her readers and viewers?
2. What messages about gender, race, and class emerge from Stewart's texts?
3. What does it mean to be a fan of Martha Stewart?
4. How do fans' gender, race, sexuality and class positions impact their reception of Stewart's magazines and television programs?
5. How did Stewart's involvement in the ImClone stock scandal impact her magazines and television programs and her relationship with her fans?

My analysis of *Martha Stewart Living* adds an examination of a contemporary domestic advisor to the small number of (mostly historical) studies of domestic advisors and advice (Leavitt, 2002; Rutherford, 2003; Scanlon, 1995). Additionally, my project adds to cultural studies scholarship that examines media texts with primarily female

audiences. While earlier studies have focused on romance novels (Modleski, 1982; Radway, 1984), women's (primarily fashion) magazines (McCracken, 1993) and soap operas (Brown, 1994), my project examines a collection of texts that are non-narrative and focus on home and garden improvement. Additionally, my project aims to examine the discourses of gender, race or class not in isolation, but through their connections within texts.

In combination, my analysis of Stewart's magazines, television programs, and audience utilizes Hall's Encoding/Decoding model (1980b) to examine how social, cultural and political discourses circulate in and through a mediated text and how those meanings are interpreted by those who receive them. In the process, I offer a snapshot of American culture at the beginning of a new millennium and give scholarly attention to a popular icon that I believe has been overlooked: Martha Stewart. To further introduce my project, this chapter contains a brief historical introduction to modern domestic advisors and describes Stewart's personal life and creation of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. The final section of this chapter outlines the chapters that make up this dissertation.

Stewart's Predecessors

In, "It Was Always a Good Thing: Historical Precedents for Martha Stewart," Sarah A. Leavitt (2001) places Martha Stewart in the history of women's writings about the home (which she traces to the 1840s) and suggests that "the history of domestic advice teaches us that Stewart has a genealogy, and that her work gets much of its meaning from its reliance on a shared understanding of the important ways that domesticity engages almost every aspect of American life" (p. 127). To Leavitt, Martha

Stewart is “a direct descendant of what came before” (p. 130). Here I will sketch Stewart’s genealogy, noting specific overlaps between Stewart and her predecessors.

Stewart shares her predecessors’ audience (white, educated, middle-class women), wide-ranging subject matter (from design and efficiency to patriotism and religion), and approach (educational, particularly involving the language of science). The history of modern writing about the home begins in the mid-nineteenth century as industrialization and commerce “precipitated the separation of spheres by gender,” reserving the public sphere for men and the private sphere for women (Rutherford, 2003, p. xiv). While the progression of the Industrial Revolution provoked a perceived moral decline in the public sphere, the home was upheld as a space of virtuous protection—and it became women’s duty to maintain it as such (Rutherford, 2003, p. xiv).

One of the most influential women writing at this time was Catherine Beecher, whose first book in 1841, *Treatise on Domestic Economy*, began her career in which she promoted an educated approach to domestic work. Beecher advocated the “doctrine of separate spheres,” and suggested that women’s realm of influence was the home (Rutherford, 2003, p. xix-xx). Education was a primary focus; to succeed in the home, women should be “trained, competent, professional workers” on a variety of subjects including laundry, cleaning, nutrition, etiquette and religion (Rutherford, 2003, pp. x-xviii). Order, efficiency and organization formed the foundation of Beecher’s message. Historian Janice Williams Rutherford (2003) suggests that Beecher “defined the American woman’s primary role as wife, mother, and homemaker more than anyone else in her time” (p. xiii).

Alongside the growth of domestic advice, craft production, particularly needlework, became “the preoccupation of middle- and upper-class women in the nineteenth century” (Beecher, 2001, p. 115). As the Industrial Revolution enabled the mass production of a number of goods that women used to produce out of necessity, a ritualistic craft culture developed that emphasized the “maker’s” skills and ingenuity and sought to preserve the experience of production by emphasizing process over the completed item (Beecher, 2001, pp. 115-120).

Godey’s Ladies Book, edited by Sarah Josepha Hale from 1837 to 1877, emphasized the domestic advice of writers like Beecher and included instructions for the newly growing interest in craft production. Hale’s career, like Beecher’s, also began with a book in 1841, *The Good Housekeeper*, but she was most known for her work at *Godey’s* and her campaign to establish Thanksgiving as a national holiday in the United States (Leavitt, 2002, p. 17). *Godey’s* was “one of the most widely read women’s magazines in the United States in its time” and covered a wide range of topics including dress and architecture, and published original literary works such as poetry and short stories (Leavitt, 2002, p. 17). Though *Godey’s* writing was less overtly about women’s role in the home, Hale praised the work of domestic advisors like Beecher.

Godey’s success and popularity inspired the creation of a number of other magazines for women. *The Ladies’ Home Journal*, which began in 1883, was one of those new titles, and it was the first women’s magazine to reach a circulation of one million (Scanlon, 1995, p. 2). Jennifer Scanlon (1995) analyzes the messages of *The Ladies’ Home Journal* (particularly 1910-1930) in *Inarticulate Longings*, and suggests that the magazine promoted “a domestic ideology that defined editors as experts,

advertisers as prophets, and, most importantly, women as consumers” (p. 3). *Journal* readers were “struggling with the uncertain legacies of the nineteenth-century women’s rights movement” (Scanlon, 1995, p. 2); however, the magazine emphasized traditional values and encouraged its readers to “read rather than act” and “conform ... rather than seek out new and possibly more revolutionary alternatives” (Scanlon, 1995, p. 6). Through its espousal of traditional domestic advice and hesitance to thoroughly address the social changes confronting its readers, the *Journal* served as a dreamworld to which readers could escape to imagine a life of fulfillment and support, and a source of validation for the decisions they made through the course of their domestic work (Scanlon, 1995, p. 232).

Christine Frederick, a home efficiency expert whose work grew in part out the scientific management theories of Frederick Taylor, was a frequent contributor to *The Ladies’ Home Journal* (Leavitt, 2002, p. 53). Her first articles were so popular that they drew a record 1600 requests for further information in the month after they were printed (Ehrenreich & English, 1978, pp. 162-163). Frederick was well-educated and interested in business (traditionally the realm of men), yet because she was “reared with nineteenth-century views that separated—at least ideally—women’s and men’s sphere,” the work she pursued focused on the domestic (Rutherford 3). Frederick built upon her predecessors’ traditional views about women’s role in the home and encouraged women to “find satisfaction by using modernization to perpetuate those old values” (Rutherford, 2003, p. 6). As Ehrenreich and English (1978) note, work like Frederick’s promised readers that the efficiency of the techniques and approaches specified would save them time; however, these techniques and approaches actually produced “new work” as one

had to add the task of analyzing, planning and recording her tasks (p. 163). Historian Janice Williams Rutherford, whose book *Selling Mrs. Consumer* (2003) examines Frederick's work, suggests that writing as she did at the intersection of the Industrial Revolution and the first wave of feminism, Frederick used traditional values to convince "newly liberated women" that they were responsible for the home (Rutherford, p. 1); Rutherford argues that Frederick's work "helped to perpetuate a conflict with which many American women still struggle" (p. 6).

The domestic advisors of the late-nineteenth century and the home economists of the early-twentieth century shared a desire to bring information about science and technology into the daily management of the home (Leavitt, 2001, p. 128). In particular, home economists like Christine Frederick "tried to revolutionize the kitchen, and bring it into modernity with values such as cleanliness and efficiency" and, as they did, they brought modernity to the whole home (Leavitt, 2001, p. 128). Although domestic advisors praised the progress of science, they packaged their information with a romanticization of the past, with a particular emphasis on Colonial America: "In domestic advice manuals, the past is always part of the decorating scheme. Even as domestic advisors tried to lure their readers into the future with new materials and new colors, they emphasized the debt of all Americans to their honorable past" (Leavitt, 2001, p. 129).

Women's magazines thrived at the beginning of the twentieth century and though most domestic advisors spoke through the forum provided by women's magazines, Emily Post, who wrote specifically about etiquette, was the "most famous domestic advisor of the first few decades of the twentieth century" (Leavitt, 2002 p. 103). Post, like many

domestic advisors before and after her, “clearly articulated that her ideas had less to do with income than with taste” (Leavitt, 2002 p. 114). In the mid-twentieth century, domestic advice was the domain of the “Seven Sisters” (*Good Housekeeping*, *Family Circle*, *Woman’s Day*, *Redbook*, *McCall’s*, *Ladies’ Home Journal*, and *Better Homes and Gardens*) (Leavitt, 2002, p. 102).

Domestic advisors in the 1930s and 1940s emphasized the family unit as the focus of a happy home. “Togetherness” was a frequently repeated term in postwar domestic advice in the United States, and part of achieving family togetherness was a change in the layout of the family home: the open-space plan (Leavitt, 2002, p. 172). The Seven Sisters promoted the open-space plan during the housing boom of the 1950s and their domestic advisors “urged women to embrace the family to the exclusion of most anything else” (Leavitt, 2002, p. 174).

Betty Friedan critiqued the open-space plan in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), arguing that the design removed privacy from women’s lives (Leavitt, 2002, p. 194). Helen Gurley Brown’s book *Sex and the Single Girl* (1962) and *Cosmopolitan*, the magazine Brown began editing in 1965, pushed aside the image of the suburban married woman that domestic advisors had constructed, calling it tired and boring, and glorified single life, sex, and having it all (Ehrenreich, 1978, p. 286). Friedan’s and Brown’s criticisms of the domesticated woman dismantled the image created by domestic advisors beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and fueled the fire of the 1960s sexual revolution and the second wave of the feminist movement. Below I discuss the ways in which Stewart’s domestic advice both drew from her predecessors and built upon the feminist movement of the 1960s to create Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia.

Martha Stewart and MSLO

Born in 1941, the second of six children to first-generation Polish-Americans Edward and Martha Kostyra, a pharmaceuticals sales representative and a sixth grade teacher respectively, Martha learned the value of a dollar at an early age. Her success as a businesswoman started at ten years of age, when Martha, fed up with the paltry wages she earned from baby-sitting, began to organize birthday parties for children in her middle-class Nutley, New Jersey neighborhood. She began modeling around the age of twelve and says of the experience, “I did television commercials for Lifebuoy soap, Tareyton and Clairol. I modeled at Bonwit Teller on Saturdays. I remember thinking that I should probably be at a football game. But it was fun” (qtd. in Kasindorf, 1995, para. 26).

Modeling helped Martha through Barnard College where she studied European and architectural history. In her sophomore year (1961), she was named one of *Glamour* magazine’s “Best-Dressed College Girls” and married her boyfriend of one year, Andy Stewart, a Yale Law School student. After her graduation, she moved with Andy Stewart to New York City where she continued to model until the birth of her daughter, Alexis, in 1965.

Stewart was raised in suburban New Jersey at a time when the separate spheres teachings of domestic advisors were still quite popular; Stewart, like many women of the time, had to reconcile the differences between the messages of the single woman and the suburban mother. Martha Stewart was newly married and completing her Bachelor’s degree in Art History at Barnard in the early 1960s when Friedan and Brown were gaining notoriety. In 1967, two years after the birth of her daughter Alexis, Stewart

joined the firm Monness, Williams and Sidel to become a stock broker on Wall Street. One of very few female stockbrokers on Wall Street at that time, she was “famous for wearing hot pants” (Cowan, 2002, p. B5).

Stewart left Wall Street during the recession in 1973 to care for her young daughter Alexis and to renovate the house she and husband Andy Stewart purchased in Westport, Connecticut; her audience would come to know the 1805 Federal-style farmhouse as “Turkey Hill.” It was then that Stewart “decided that the home was really my place” (qtd. in Green, 1995, para. 24).

Building on her newfound interest in the home, Stewart began a catering business with Norma Collier in 1975 called the “Uncatered Affair.” However, the partnership was short-lived. When Collier left, Stewart created “Martha Stewart, Inc.” and catered from Turkey Hill. Stewart’s endeavor was an overwhelming success, as *Working Woman’s* Jeanie Russell Kasindorf (1995) confirms: “In less than 10 years, [Martha Stewart, Inc.] grew into a \$1 million-plus business, with corporate clients all over the East Coast” (para. 29).

Stewart’s reputation as a caterer launched her publishing career in 1982 with her first book, *Entertaining*, which was co-written with Elizabeth Hawes. *Entertaining*, published by Crown’s Clarkson Potter imprint, included over three hundred recipes and menus for nine different party ideas based on Stewart’s catering career (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 401). While *Entertaining* doles out the practical advice necessary to plan an event and prepare the dishes necessary for the party ideas (adhering to generic conventions), it also bears the distinctive marks of what would become Martha Stewart’s signature style: the

portrayal of Stewart's life as exemplary, her voice as expert, and her suggestions as elite.

The Exemplary Life

In *Entertaining* Stewart gives readers a glimpse of her exemplary personal life through narratives, recipes, and photos that encourage readers to feel as though they can know Stewart personally. For example, readers learn in *Entertaining's* introduction that Stewart, the grandchild of Polish immigrants, grew up humbly in suburban New Jersey, and that Stewart's talent is in part the result of early experiences in three kitchens: her mother's, her grandmother's and her childhood neighbors', the Mauses. Stewart describes her connection to each of the kitchens and includes meaningful recipes from each in *Entertaining*.

Narratives in each of *Entertaining's* chapters describe Stewart's path to the privileged life that she now lives. The many pictures of Stewart (working in her well-appointed kitchen at Turkey Hill, donning beekeepers' clothing as she gathers honey from her Italian honeybees, and standing with staff overlooking endless platters of food) reinforce her new class status and place Stewart's lifestyle at the center of her instructions for successful entertaining, suggesting that if Stewart could build upon her modest beginnings to become an important caterer for the New England elite, her readers can use her careful advice to bring the very best to their important occasions. The fact that many of *Entertaining's* pictures are of Stewart alone, Stewart's home, and the fruits of Stewart's skill as a caterer, reinforces that it is Stewart's tastes and abilities that readers are encouraged to emulate.

The Voice of the Expert

Stewart writes in a scholarly voice, constructing herself as a serious student of entertaining in order to ground her authority as a teacher. For example, before Stewart describes the steps necessary to accomplish the tempura party she includes in *Entertaining*, she describes how, on her “last trip to Japan” she studied with master chef Ten Masa “... listening to him talk about different species of fish (he says he studied fish for 60 years), watching him cut up an astounding variety of ingredients into precise little shapes” (p. 108). Additional examples of Stewart’s discussion of her studiousness include reading Mrs. Ely’s *The Practical Flower Gardener* “like a bible” (p. 4) and “immers[ing]” herself in “Oriental manuals” for cutting techniques for fruits and vegetable crudités (pp. 67-68). Stewart’s inclusion of these references to her “education” bolsters her credibility and underscores the importance she gives to traditional forms of schooling and the importance of learning from experts.

Just as Stewart uses the language of education to describe her own “schooling” in the art of entertaining, Stewart constructs a traditional authoritarian voice with which to speak to her readers. Stewart carefully contextualizes the recipes, lists and step-by-step instructions that are components of the genre to which *Entertaining* belongs with a teacherly voice, in part referencing information from her experience as a caterer, in part drawing from her interest in and knowledge of obscure cultural details. For example, as Stewart introduces her readers to her idea for an omelette party, she gives practical advice including organization and preparation, but she begins the chapter with the history of omelettes: “In France, early in this century, the delicate creations of a certain fortuitously named Mere Poularde [French for “chicken”] drew attention to the dish” (p. 80).² Stewart

treats additional topics similarly, and offers history lessons on *hors d'oeuvres* (p. 30), *crudités* (p. 63), the buffet (p. 126), and desserts in colonial America (pp. 230-232). That Stewart has the knowledge to teach the reader about the cultural history of her subjects boosts her credibility as a scholar. Further, it reinforces Stewart's self-construction as a hard-working and focused student, and suggests that such details should be included in a proper education for those who aspire to entertain well.

Elite Taste

The stories, recipes, and images in *Entertaining* reflect a world of elite taste and leisure time; from these Stewart creates a model for entertaining well. Stewart argues in *Entertaining*'s introduction that the "new style of entertaining" is "informal, relaxed, and expressive, based not on intimidating prescriptions and pretensions, but on personality and effort" (p. 9). However, the artistic photographs of elaborate spreads of foods creatively embellished on tables of antique linens and shining china, silver, and crystal underscore the idea that Stewart's suggestions require a large budget for food, ample leisure time to prepare the meals, and the taste to know what is appropriate.

Stewart argues in *Entertaining* that "a well-composed plate is ... as satisfying as a Cézanne still life" (p. 23). Indeed, the food photographed for *Entertaining* does look like fine art, and each picture reveals the careful attention Stewart gives to preparation, placement, color, and variety; this careful attention to detail, combined with the photos of (predominantly white) guests enjoying the events Stewart coordinated, emphasizes the appearance of the event over the experience of the event—how the food tastes and if guests enjoyed the party seems to matter little.

Stewart's menus, and the recipes that compose them, draw heavily from European cuisine (Bouillabaisse for Twelve to Sixteen, p. 176; Italian Buffet for Fifty, p. 138), though she does include classic American recipes (A Country Pie Party for Fifty, p. 242; Country Fare Cocktails for Two Hundred, p. 53) when deemed appropriate. Asian menus and recipes (A Chinese Banquet for Ten to Twelve, p. 121; Oriental Cocktails for Eight to Twelve, p. 39) are included when Stewart wishes to give events "an exotic cast" (p. 39). Stewart's discussion of the events she has catered ("a large clam bake on a little private island in Long Island Sound," p. 135; a "Soiree Dansante" for two hundred in an "expansive Connecticut home," p. 249) emphasizes that her ideas are drawn from her experience with the best ingredients at the most exclusive affairs. *Entertaining* suggests an elite class sensibility and though Stewart's credibility is based in part on her experience of serving the affluent, she makes it clear that she has become a member of the elite through careful study; to verify the taste she has acquired, she offers the reader a glimpse into her personal life.

Entertaining's success led quickly to a number of additional titles Stewart published throughout the 1980s, including *Martha Stewart Hors d'Oeuvres* (1984), *Martha Stewart Weddings* (1987), and *Martha Stewart's Christmas* (1989). In addition to book publishing, Stewart regularly contributed to *Family Circle* magazine, *The New York Times* and *House Beautiful* (American Academy, n.d., para. 5), published a newsletter, recorded how-to videos and gave charity lectures and quarterly seminars (those held at Turkey Hill cost \$900 to attend) (Bland, 1988, p. 92).

In 1987 Stewart signed a \$5 million, five-year agreement to be a "life-style consultant" for discounting giant Kmart (then the largest retailer in the United States) that

was steadily losing sales to Wal-Mart (Perman, 1997, para. 5). The deal included appearances and a product line that contained paints, linens and tableware in hopes that Kmart's connection to Stewart would improve negative public opinion about the quality of Kmart's product lines.

By the end of the 1980s, Stewart was undoubtedly accomplished, but she had set her sights on still larger goals; as she told *Adweek's* Mark Adams (1996): "I'd written all these books, and I had an idea called 'the beautiful how-to series' ... I thought, what format could work for this immense amount of information? And the only thing I could think of was a television show allied with a magazine" (para. 2). To this end, Stewart collaborated with Time, Inc. in 1990 to produce two test issues for a magazine: the first appeared in November 1990, and the second in March 1991. The test issue's sales encouraged Time to publish six issues of *Martha Stewart Living* a year with a rate base of 250,000 (the circulation guaranteed to advertisers). In August 1994, based on *Martha Stewart Living's* healthy circulation, Time increased the six yearly issues to ten and raised the guaranteed rate base to 800,000 (Pederson, 1994, p. 19). *Advertising Age's* Jon Fine (2000) called *Living* "one of the decade's biggest publishing success stories" (p. 24).

Stewart became a regular guest on NBC's *Today* show in 1991; her once-every-other-week appearances created publicity for *Martha Stewart Living* magazine and demonstrated that her appeal translated to the world of television. Stewart's own half-hour weekly television series debuted September 18, 1993. By the end of 1994, the show aired in 115 US markets (Pederson, 1994, p. 19) and averaged a rating of 2.1, up from its initial rating of 1.4 (Huhn, 1994, p. 4).³

In 1994, twelve years after the publication of *Entertaining*, Stewart had three million books in print, a magazine selling half a million copies per issue and a weekly television program airing in eighty-four percent of the US market (Kasindorf, 1995, para. 3). Based on the strength of Stewart's endeavors and her desire to create more still, she approached Time, with the help of management consultant Sharon Patrick, for the support to take her vision further. The resulting joint venture created Martha Stewart Living Enterprises and named Stewart chair and CEO. Built on Time's funding and Stewart's name and ideas, Martha Stewart Living Enterprises consisted of four divisions. Two of the divisions, publishing and television, united Stewart's previous endeavors. The remaining two divisions, multimedia and merchandising, positioned MSL Enterprises to enter into Internet and catalog marketing and to explore the possibility of creating a chain of retail stores (Kasindorf, 1995, para 6).

The creation of Martha Stewart Living Enterprises in January 1995 brought Stewart additional success. By the end of 1995, the television division of MSL Enterprises reached five million viewers a week through its weekly shows and syndication on Lifetime, which broadcast Stewart's show twice a day Monday through Friday and once on Saturdays (Marin 1995, para. 4). In December 1995, CBS aired Stewart's first prime-time special, *Martha Stewart's Home for the Holidays*.

MSL Enterprises was also succeeding in publishing: in 1995, *Martha Stewart Living* became a monthly magazine and its rate base was boosted to 1.5 million (Marin, 1995, para. 4), its success based in part on the addition of a "TV Program Guide" that included recipes and source information from Stewart's television program. Promoting the magazine through a toll-free phone number on the television program produced, as

Stewart reported, “1100 or 1200 orders a week for the magazine, no effort” (qtd. in Pederson, 1995, para. 16). In 1995, all of Stewart’s book titles with Crown Publishing Group were still in print (and estimated to have sold nearly 4 million copies) (Kasindorf, 1995, para. 36), and Time’s Oxmoor division began producing “best of” books based on magazine stories from *Martha Stewart Living* (Adams, 1996, para. 16). A new syndicated newspaper column, entitled “AskMartha” debuted in December 1995. Additionally, Stewart tested the waters in the mail order industry with “Martha by Mail,” which premiered as an insert in *Martha Stewart Living* magazine in June 1996.

Though Stewart was realizing her initial vision of the company, which she described to *Newsweek*’s Rick Marin (1995) as “omnimedia” or a business that “encompass[es] as many different media as possible” (para. 4), she continued to push to extend her empire. In January 1997, frustrated with what she perceived as Time’s unwillingness to expand ventures other than those in publishing, Martha Stewart used an advance on future royalties from a new merchandising deal with Kmart to buy Time, Inc.’s majority stake in Martha Stewart Living Enterprises for an estimated \$75 million (“Martha Inc.,” 2000, para. 2).

Of the purchase Stewart said, “Time is not a television company ... They are not an online service. They are not a merchandising company.” As Stewart suggested, the move built a foundation for the multimedia company she believed Time kept her from creating: “We have all of those things in place now to follow up on and really build on” (qtd. in Gremillion, 1997, p. 10). With majority control (Time retained “an equity share of less than 20 percent”), Stewart became Chair and Sharon Patrick became Chief Operating Officer of the business, which Stewart renamed Martha Stewart Living

Omnimedia (MSLO) and restructured into three divisions: Publishing & Internet, Broadcasting, and Merchandising (Kerwin, 1997, para. 2-5). The deal gave Stewart ownership of the content produced for *Martha Stewart Living* magazine and positioned MSLO to reach 30 million people a week (Perman, 1997, para. 33).

With this increase in control came major changes and additions to the business. Kmart announced the details of its joint venture with Stewart in February 1997, which included the development of Martha Stewart Everyday, a collection of coordinated bed and bath linens, tablewear, paints, and window treatments; the line was expected to generate \$500 million in its first year (Perman, 1997, para. 11). To promote Stewart's products at Kmart, the retailer created 4500 square foot Martha Stewart Everyday boutiques in each of its 2,145 stores (Horn, 1997, p. 59).

Stewart made the switch in March 1997 from twice-weekly appearances on NBC's *Today* to once-weekly appearances on CBS's *This Morning* to construct a lead-in to her own show (which aired on CBS, often after *This Morning*) and to control the advertising for her segment (Perman, 1997, para. 24). Many of the biggest changes at MSLO took effect in September 1997. For example, Stewart's television show grew from weekly to five days a week and split into two programs: *Martha Stewart Living Weekdays* and *Martha Stewart Living Weekend*. Also, MSLO introduced a daily national radio show, called "askMartha," that reached sixty-three percent of the listening population in 1997, a complement to the nationally syndicated newspaper column of the same name (Perman, 1997, para. 24).

MSLO went online in September 1997, an event for which Stewart had been preparing for some time. By October 1997, the site (www.marthastewart.com) averaged

550,000 visitors a week and sent daily emails on various topics to subscribers (Perman, 1997, para. 25). The site served as a companion to Stewart's television show and offered a program guide, listing recipes and source information from the show. Additionally, Stewart's website offered information on *Martha Stewart Living* magazine, allowed visitors to ask questions to be answered by Stewart and her staff, and included information on Stewart's mail order company, "Martha by Mail," which emerged as a stand-alone catalog in November 1997 (Perman, 1997, para. 27).

While Stewart's purchase of her media forms and outlets from Time permitted her to expand the organization in the ways she had been advocating, the creation of MSLO is also significant because it allowed Stewart to develop and exert total control over two practices with which she had already achieved some measure of success: cross-promotion among her media formats and leveraging of content. As the "omnimedia" in MSLO's name implies, the company's focus became sending its message through as many different media formats as possible, while referring audience members to its additional media formats. As aforementioned, the placement of a television program guide in *Living* increased magazine sales. *Working Woman's* Jeanie Kasindorf (1995) reported that Stewart's television show had also increased the audience for Stewart's books (para. 44). Thus, the ability to control the content of each of Stewart's multiplying media formats enabled the company to promote and stimulate demand for her other media formats and licensed products.

In addition to increased control over cross-merchandising, the creation of MSLO gave Stewart the ability to spread research and development costs among the divisions of MSLO to allow the company to develop ideas more thoroughly than their competitors.

Announcing the creation of MSLO to *Living* readers in her November 2000 column “A Letter from Martha,” Stewart explained this strategy which she calls “leveraging”:⁴

We explain [to stockholders] how the expenses associated with making a single article—for example, “Silverplate Riddles” in this issue—can then be allocated in part to other areas of the business. Thus the costs of researching these peculiar and beautiful objects, gathering and collecting them in one place so they can be photographed, styling the pictures and taking them, designing the story, and publishing an intelligent, provocative, and accurate text, can in the future be spread out into other parts of the company. We can, and most certainly will, do a television segment on collecting, and we will be able to use the superb photographs to illustrate one of the “encyclopedias” we are preparing for our website (p. 12).

Martha Stewart Living garden editor Margaret Roach gave an additional example of the leveraging strategy in *Business Week* (2000): the information collected for a story written about Stewart’s rose garden was published in the magazine, became the basis for a television segment, helped in the design of garden tools for the Everyday line at Kmart, and became “how-to information” on marthastewart.com (“Martha Inc.,” para. 3).

The strength of MSLO’s business model was underscored by recognition from the business world: MSLO’s “leveraging” became a model for study at Harvard Business School (Willdorf, 2002, para. 6), and Martha Stewart and Sharon Patrick became “hot tickets at business-school seminars across the country” (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 398). Stewart’s “omnimedia” strategies proved financially successful as well: in 1998 MSLO made \$24 million from \$180 million in sales—a 71% increase over 1997 net income (“Martha Inc.,” para. 2).

On October 19, 1999, Stewart celebrated MSLO’s move to Wall Street and public ownership. In line with her drive to make every event the perfect event, Stewart served breakfast—brioches and freshly squeezed orange juice—in a striped tent to New York Stock Exchange employees. After Stewart rang the opening bell at the New York Stock

Exchange, shares of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia opened at \$18 and reached \$52 before closing around \$35, an unusually strong showing for an initial offering. By the end of the day, MSLO had raised \$149 million and Martha Stewart was a billionaire and the second-richest self-made woman in the United States (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 397).⁵ Despite MSLO's move from private to public ownership, Martha Stewart retained control of 60% of the business's shares and 96% of the voting stock ("Martha Inc.," 2000, para. 3). In 1999, Stewart's media messages reached 91 million people per month (O'Neill, 1999, para. 8).

Shortly after MSLO went public, analysts began to express concern that Martha Stewart the person was dangerously tied to Martha Stewart the brand. As *Business Week* (2000) reported: "Stewart's smiling image dominates her TV show, magazine and product packaging. If Martha Stewart Living is to outlast her, that has to change" ("Martha Inc.," para. 2). MSLO's strategy to combat these concerns, in addition to "taking out massive insurance policies on its ubiquitous chief," was to make the creative forces behind Martha Stewart more visible in her media offerings ("Martha Inc.," para. 2). In addition, the company positioned itself to launch new media offerings recognizable to Stewart's audiences as based on her philosophies and taste levels, even though Stewart was not visible in each (Fine, 2000, p. 24).

In 2000, MSLO expanded into Europe and Latin America by "dubbing and distributing" Stewart's television program (McMurdy, 2000, para. 8). MSLO partnered with Zellers to sell Stewart's "Everyday" line of housewares and linens in Canada (McMurdy, 2000, para. 7). Stewart's television program launched on Japan's "women-oriented cable network" LaLa in October 2000 and was shown "up to four times daily"

(Kelts, 2002, para. 3). In 2001, MSLO contracted with Japanese retailer The Seiyu to carry Stewart's merchandise in their 226 stores and to publish *Martha*, a magazine modeled on Stewart's *Living* for Japanese readers (Dignam, 2001, p. 7). In the United States, MSLO's publishing division grew in 2001 with the addition of two new magazines: *Martha Stewart Baby* and *Martha Stewart Kids*, and *From Martha's Kitchen* premiered on the Food Network. Further, Stewart's licensing divisions created new product offering including flowers, greeting cards and fabrics (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 398). Sales in 2000 were \$285 million (Dignam, 2001, para. 2); sales in 2001 were \$296 million (Willdorf, 2002, para. 12).

Similarity to Predecessors

In the creation of the messages and products that make MSLO profitable, Stewart and her employees draw directly from the history of domestic advice discussed above. In a brief conversation with Stewart, Sarah Leavitt (2002) was impressed by Stewart's "remarkable knowledge" of the history of domestic advice and learned that Stewart "had some of [the domestic advisors'] works in her office, which she referred to from time to time for her magazine" (p. 1). Stewart shared this knowledge with readers in *Living's* September/October 1991 issue in "A Letter from Martha" by comparing the mission of the magazine to the work of Mrs. Isabella Beeton (a British domestic advisor from the nineteenth-century):

Like Mrs. Beeton, we wish to give you a great wealth of information. We do not write of this year's decorators or the new season's colors; we do not tell you what to do. We tell you how. ... Like Mrs. Beeton, we understand that managing a household is often hard work. We cope by spending our time doing a small number of tasks well, rather than be searching for shortcuts (1991a, p. 4).

In 2002, *Martha Stewart Living*'s Editor-in-Chief Douglas Brenner directly connected the work in the pages of *Living* to *Godey's Ladies Book*:

In striving to make every how-to clear and foolproof, we're upholding a tradition that dates to the mid-nineteenth century, when pioneering women's magazines guided their readers through every detail of domesticity. Some of the Victorian-style decorations in this issue were adapted from originals published in the 1870s by *Godey's Lady's Book* (p. 24).

Like her predecessors, Stewart created *Living* with the idea that "homemaking could indeed be elevated, through education, to an art;" her goal as she stated it in "Remembering" in *Living*'s January 2001 issue, was to pursue her dream "of bettering the country's image of the 'homemaker'" (2001a, p. 196).

Just like those who came before her, Stewart and her staff emphasize the benefits of new technology. In *Living*'s February 1997 issue, Stewart stressed that her "forty phone sets, each with call-waiting and call-answering capabilities, five car phones, and two cellular phones with eight batteries that must be charged and recharged often, ... three desktop computers, three printers, two scanners, and a laptop with faxing and E-mail capabilities" help her accomplish her many, many tasks (p. 8). She urges readers to "settle into a more comfortable relationship with technology, so we don't let it take over, but instead let it help us" (p. 8).

Stewart's media messages similarly pay homage to tradition. Editor-in-chief Stephen Drucker wrote in his "Editor's Letter" in September 1998 that:

One of the many missions of this magazine is to build an archive of American traditions—a record of all the ways that families and regions and cultures set up home, celebrate the milestones of life, and pass along what they've learned to the next generation.

The twentieth century, so eager to get on with the future, hasn't been especially kind to traditions. In fact, much of this century has been dedicated to sweeping them away, which as it turns out, isn't especially difficult to do. All it takes is one broken link—from mother to daughter, from country to city—and a

little bit of hard-earned wisdom valued for hundreds of years is gone forever (p. 29).

This blend of the past and the present remains an important component of Stewart's message.

Stewart shares more than messages of the home with these early domestic advisors; their personal lives are also strikingly similar. By the time Stewart began *Martha Stewart Living* in 1991, she was divorced with a grown daughter. Catharine Beecher never married and Hale was a widow who turned to writing to support her family. All led lives quite different from the ones they urged their readers to follow: Beecher "sought the power and influence available only to men" (Rutherford, 2003, p. xix), Frederick advised her readers to focus on the home yet "she went out in public to spread the gospel of efficiency and consumerism" (Rutherford, 2003, p. 3), and the staff of *The Ladies Home Journal* "led lives distinctly unlike those they counseled readers to live" (Scanlon, 1995, p. 4). Despite their similarities, Stewart has been far more successful than her predecessors. Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO), the company Stewart built on her version of domestic advice, has made her "the most prolific and successful of the modern domestic advisors" (Leavitt, 2002, p. 197). This success, however, would prove to be difficult to maintain.

Trouble in Paradise

In spite of MSLO's incredible expansion and success, by early 2001 media reports suggested the company might be showing some growing pains. In March 2001, *Forbes* reported that *Martha Stewart Living*'s television ratings were down to 1.5 from 2.4 the year before, and that the drop in ratings meant that many local stations (Atlanta, Philadelphia, and Nashville, for example) moved the show out of its usual 9 a.m. time

slot into post-midnight slots (Wells, 2001, para. 2). The reason for the drop in viewership of the then eight-year-old program was suggested to be “too much Martha, too often” (Wells, 2001, para. 6). In July 2001, MSLO issued a “profits warning” since a drop in earnings would result in reduced advertising revenues (Dignam, 2001, p. 7). *Advertising Age* reported in August 2001 that second quarter revenues at MSLO were down in publishing (2.2%), television (1.3%) and internet and mail order (10%) (Dignam, 2001, p. 7).

To complicate matters, Kmart declared bankruptcy in January 2002. The Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart had contributed 13% to MSLO’s sales in 2001 (Ambroz 2002, para. 3), and the expected closing of between 250 and 350 Kmart stores was predicted to impact sales of the Everyday line (Ambroz 2002, para. 10). Shortly after Kmart’s announcement, analysis of MSLO’s 2001 earnings revealed an increase in overall revenue, despite the drop in 2001 advertising income; the setbacks were written off by analysts as due to “a misfortune-plagued 2001 [due in part to the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center towers]” (Ambroz, 2002, para. 1). However, decreases in MSLO’s internet and catalog operations caused great concern (“Martha to tighten,” 2002, p. 6). In March 2002, MSLO announced it would cut 40 jobs. This savings, along with a new president of the online/direct mail division of MSLO, positioned the company to rebound from its troubles (Wahlgren 2002, para. 12). Reassuring the press, investors and customers, MSLO President Sharon Patrick stressed that the business was unshakable: “We have a strong balance sheet with case of nearly \$140 million and no debt This position will allow us to easily manage whatever near-term uncertainty this situation presents” (qtd. in Ambroz 2002, para. 14).

MSLO and Martha Stewart would need this strength and more to weather the events that 2002 would bring. In April 2002, “veteran business writer” Christopher Byron published his unauthorized biography of Martha Stewart, *Martha Inc.* (Schwarzbaum, 2002, p.137). *The New York Times* called the book “dishy” (Cowan, 2002, p. B5), *Entertainment Weekly* described it as “sniping” (Schwarzbaum, 2002, p. 137), and *Newsweek* suggested that it portrayed Stewart as “a foulmouthed, manipulative shrew who dumped her husband for, among other transgressions, not stacking the firewood *just so*” (Naughton, 2002, p. 36). While the negative picture of Stewart that *Martha Inc.* painted was not particularly new (Jerry Oppenheimer published a similar unauthorized biography in 1997 entitled *Just Desserts*, and entertainment media regularly critiqued Stewart’s persona), the biography received much media attention, which set the stage for the impact of the scandal in which Stewart would soon become involved.

On June 6, 2002, the House Energy and Commerce Committee confirmed rumors that Stewart’s December 27, 2001 sale of ImClone stock was under investigation (Kadlec, 2002, p. 39). Stewart’s sale had raised suspicion because she sold her 3,928 shares of ImClone stock the day before the Food and Drug Administration made public its decision to reject ImClone’s application for approval of its anticancer drug Erbitux (Stanley & Hays, 2002, p. 1). On June 12, 2002, the founder of biotechnology company ImClone and Stewart’s close friend, Samuel D. Waksal, was arrested on insider-trading charges (Stanley & Hays 2002, p. 1). Phone records revealed that Stewart had been in contact with her Merrill Lynch broker Peter Baconovic (the same broker Waksal’s daughter used to sell her stocks) and that Stewart had left voicemail for Sam Waksal immediately following (Peyser, 2002, p. 38). These events, in Carol Stabile’s (2004)

words, marked the beginning of “a reversal of fortune that the US news media aggressively and delightedly chronicled” (p. 315).

The media attention *Martha Inc.* and the ImClone scandal drew caused “incalculable damage” to Stewart’s reputation and, as a result, hurt Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (Gross, 2002, para. 4). On June 25, 2002, Stewart ended her regular appearances on CBS’s *Early Show* when host Jane Clayson repeatedly questioned Stewart about her ImClone sale (Toobin, 2003, p. 44). By the end of June 2002, MSLO’s stock had dropped 34% from its June 6, 2002, price (Gross 2002, para. 14); in late July 2002, a survey by America’s Research Group found that twenty percent of those who had previously purchased Stewart’s products felt less likely to buy her products in the future (Chartier 2002, para. 2). In October 2002, MSLO relaunched its Martha by Mail catalog, removing direct ties to Stewart by renaming it “The Catalog for Living” (Koncius, 2002, p. D7). Stewart’s 2002 holiday television special was cancelled (Gregory & Kadlec, 2002, p. 29).

In January 2003, MSLO launched a new digest-sized magazine called *Everyday Food*, a publication that minimized its direct ties to Stewart with its tagline, “From the kitchens of Martha Stewart Living.” MSLO insisted *Everyday Food* was part of a “long-range plan ... to give the company an identity beyond [Stewart’s] own image” (Toobin, 2003, p. 44). In early 2003, MSLO posted its first quarterly loss since the company went public in 1999; television ratings were down, the Internet division cut an additional 40 of 90 jobs, and *Martha Stewart Living* magazine reported declines in circulation and advertising (“News of the Market, 2003, para. 1).

As the investigation of Stewart's ImClone stock sale progressed, and the media's focus on the scandal remained intense, NBC turned Byron's biography into a movie-of-the-week, directed by Jason Ensler and starring Cybil Shepherd. *Martha Inc: the Story of Martha Stewart* aired on May 19, 2003 and drew fourteen million viewers during May sweeps to become the season's top-rated made-for-television-movie (Vejnoska, 2003, para. 2). The movie made visual Byron's negative portrayal of Stewart; *Business Week's* Patricia O'Connell (2003) noted that the movie depicted Stewart as "a backstabbing, egomaniacal control freak" (para. 7), and *Newsweek's* Keith Naughton and Barney Gimbel (2004) described it as "mostly a hatchet job" (p. 36).

Stewart was indicted on June 4, 2003 for obstruction of justice, conspiracy, making false statements, and securities fraud (Tyrnauer, 2005, p. 178). Shortly thereafter Stewart resigned as the chair and chief executive of MSLO, yet retained a position as chief creative officer and as a member of the board (Sorkin, 2003, para. 2).

Stewart's trial began in January 20, 2004 and ended on March 5, 2004, with a conviction on four counts of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and making false statements (the securities fraud charge had been thrown out in February 2004). On March 8, 2004, Viacom announced it would drop Stewart's television program from its CBS and UPN stations (Associated Press, 2004, para. 1), effectively reducing the distribution of the show across the United States from 94 percent of TV households to 52 percent (Gough, 2004, para. 13). Stewart resigned as chief creative officer and board member of MSLO on March 15, 2004, and created a new position, founding editorial director (SEC rules bar convicted felons from serving in executive positions) (D'innocenzio, 2004, para. 1-2).

In preparation for Stewart's sentencing, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, in May 2004, announced changes designed to help the company survive the negative publicity and Stewart's absence if she was sentenced to prison, including deemphasizing Stewart's name and making the name "Living" (minus Martha Stewart) the focus for the brand (Gough 2004, para. 4). On July 16, 2004, Stewart was sentenced to five months in prison, five months under house arrest, a \$30,000 fine, and two years under supervision by a probation office, "the lightest sentence possible under federal guidelines" (Masters, 2004, para. 2). By the end of August 2004, MSLO shut down its mail-order catalog, laid off over one hundred employees, and put Stewart's television programs on hiatus for the 2004-2005 season (Hays, 2004b, para. 13).

Stewart remained free until her appeal of the verdict was resolved. However, delays in the appeal process prompted Stewart, on September 15, 2004, to announce her intention to serve her five month prison term as soon as possible "to put this nightmare behind me, both personally and professionally" (Crawford, 2004, para. 2). Drops in circulation and advertiser revenue led to the September 2004 redesign of *Martha Stewart Living* (Hays, 2004b, para. 12), which reduced the size and changed the location of Stewart's name and removed Stewart's presence in the magazine (Tyrnauer, 2005, p. 178).

Stewart reported to a minimum-security federal prison in Alderson, West Virginia, on October 8, 2004. While still at Alderson, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia announced a record loss of \$60 million in 2004, ten times its 2003 loss (Naughton, 2005, p. 39). In *Vanity Fair*'s Matthew Tyrnauer's (2005) words, Martha Stewart "was now her company's biggest liability rather than its biggest asset" (p. 178).

Preview of Chapters

In the four chapters that follow, I introduce the theories and methods that formed the foundation for my project, and reveal the findings of my analysis. Chapter Two includes an introduction to the research from the areas of American mass communication studies, British cultural studies, and feminist scholarship from which I took my analytical tools. Additionally, I introduce Hall's Encoding/Decoding model (1980b), which guided my approach to studying *Martha Stewart Living*. Essentially, Hall conceptualizes the process of mediated message transmission as two interrelated structures: encoding, in which the message's producers structure a message's meaning, and decoding, in which the audience member interprets the message. Encoding and decoding alike are influenced by the social, professional, and cultural competencies of the message's producers and receivers. Hall argues that though producers have more power to determine a message's meaning, the ways audience members decode messages may be quite different from the encoders' intended meanings. In line with Hall's model, my dissertation is built of two main components: an analysis of Stewart's magazine and television messages with the intention of exploring their foundational elements, and an investigation of the meanings Stewart's fans made from *Martha Stewart Living*.

The findings from my textual and ideological analysis are the focus of Chapter Three. As one of the most successful media organizations of the 1990s and 2000s, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia has produced a collection of media messages that have influenced Americans' lives. In this chapter I describe the components of Stewart's magazines, television programs, and website, beginning with mode of address and moving to discourses of gender, race and class. Additionally, I examine the role that

Stewart plays in her texts as she models the lifestyle suggestions *Martha Stewart Living* contains.

Chapter Four contains description and analysis of focus group interviews with thirty-eight participants with a range of different gender, sexual, race and class identifications. I examine fans' relationships to Martha Stewart and *Martha Stewart Living*, working to see how fans understand the discourses about gender, race, and class in Stewart's magazines and television programs, and how fans incorporate Stewart's lifestyle suggestions into their lives. I also examine the ways audience scholars have used the term "fan" and apply what I learned about Stewart's fans to make suggestions for reconceptualizing the term.

Because Stewart was involved in the ImClone scandal in the midst of my study, and her texts and fan reactions to them changed in the process of my research, in Chapter Five I update the developments in Stewart's career since she reported to Alderson Women's Prison in October 2004. Stewart emerged from prison five months later to great fanfare with two new television programs and an empire to rebuild. Chapter Five also contains a synthesis of the connections among the previous chapters to describe what my research offers in terms of understanding Stewart's influence in American culture. I conclude by speculating about Stewart's future.

In sum, my hope is that my dissertation demonstrates the importance of studying often overlooked texts. I agree with David Morley's (1992) assertion that "there is ... no such thing as 'an innocent text' no programme which is not worthy of serious attention, no programme which can claim to provide only 'entertainment' rather than messages about society" (p. 82). I, like Sarah Leavitt (2002) believe that examination of domestic

advice is important “because it illuminates national priorities, addresses public dilemmas, and reminds us that what we have in our homes connects us to the larger culture” (p. 206). Thus, in my work in the following four chapters, I use my close textual and ideological analysis of *Martha Stewart Living* and my focus group interviews with Stewart’s fans, to trace messages and meanings about gender, race and class, offering a snapshot of contemporary American culture and the ways in which it has been understood by those who have experienced it.

Notes

¹ Because the variety of formats through which Stewart delivers her messages are quite similar, I refer to each of these formats as one unified text, *Martha Stewart Living*. Almost all of the different formats share this moniker, and the skill with which Stewart repackages information from one format for another has been duly noted (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 398).

² Note that Stewart uses the French spelling of the term here. Stewart uses the foreign spelling of many words throughout *Entertaining*—reinforcing her status as a worldly expert.

³ One point is roughly equivalent to one million viewing households.

⁴ Leveraging makes it difficult to analyze each of the media formats separately. Though their content is not identical, it is based on the same research and the style and form of address is quite similar, differing only perhaps due to differences in medium. Therefore, in many areas of this chapter I refer to the content of MSLO as a unified text, *Living*, and make reference to specific content from specific formats when necessary.

⁵ In 2001, the richest self-made woman in the United States was Theresa Pan; Oprah Winfrey was number three (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 397).

CHAPTER 2

THEORIES AND METHODS

Introduction

As described in the previous chapter, my attempt to understand the Martha Stewart phenomenon is in essence an attempt to understand the moment in US popular culture from which Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia emerged. To do this, I have traced the ideologies of gender, race, and class that exist in Stewart's media texts and in the reception of Stewart's messages by her audiences, aiming to demonstrate how Stewart's successes and failures, and messages and products, reflect the period of time under study. My project is guided by three overlapping frameworks: American mass communication research, which provides a foundation for the study of the meaning and impact of media messages; British cultural studies research, which provides a framework for studying the ways in which media texts and audiences work to create meaning; and feminist research, which puts the study of gender at the center of inquiry. The methods I use to analyze Stewart's magazines and television programs (textual and ideological analysis), and to understand the ways Stewart's audiences interpret her texts (reception studies), are drawn directly from these theoretical frameworks. Below I provide an outline of each of the three theoretical traditions and the methodological approaches I have taken from them, and discuss their influence on my project.

Theories

American Mass Communication Research

John Durham Peters (1989) traces the development of the study of mass communication in the United States from the Progressive Era through the 1950s in

“Democracy and American Mass Communication Theory.” Peters argues that while the field appears to have pursued a narrow path of media effects on the surface, it actually is founded on a political project dedicated to “talking about the perils and possibilities of democracy” (p. 200). Peters asserts that democracy is not just a subject among many in the study of mass communication, it is a preoccupation that is “part of the structure” (p. 200) of the field. To support his assertions, Peters examines the research traditions of three American scholars: John Dewey, Walter Lippman, and Paul Lazarsfeld. Peters argues that all three scholars were concerned with the effects of industrialization, which they perceived as a threat to the possibility that average people could (or would be willing to) keep up with and/or understand the increased amount of information available to them. Below I use Peters’ framework to sketch the development of mass communication research and to trace the tradition of mass communication that informs my project.

Dewey and the Industrial Revolution. Peters suggests that John Dewey’s work is representative of research produced during the Progressive Era (1890s through the 1920s). Although many historical accounts of the development of mass communication assert that the field developed between World War I and World War II, Peters begins with Dewey because he believes that beginning with Dewey’s work will “restore political self-consciousness to American media studies” (1989, p. 200). This is due in part to the fact that Dewey, unlike many social scientists who followed him, believed that academic inquiry was necessarily value-laden and should be undertaken to improve people’s lives.

For Dewey, democracy was “a whole way of life, a form of social organization in which all can realize their personalities in full” (Peters, 1989, p. 204). Key to Dewey’s

conception of democracy is the idea that an individual's purpose in life was to pursue psychological growth, or "self-realization" (Peters p. 203), and though part of the achievement of self-realization was dependent on the abilities of the individual, Dewey believed an individual's potential was structured by the qualities of the community in which s/he lived. Thus, to insure a healthy democracy and the achievement of self-realization, communities must offer a "diverse social life which offers a limitless variety of paths" (Peters, 1989, 203).

The Industrial Revolution confronted scholars in Dewey's era with changes in speed and scale that "forced them to live in a world different from the remembered world of intimate communities they were born into" (Peters, 1989, p. 201). As the natures of communities changed, Dewey was challenged to imagine the possibilities for democracy in this new world. Communication was Dewey's answer to the changing cultural landscape at the turn of the twentieth century; he argued that communication would enable individuals to "be full, participating members in the public life in a community" (Peters, p. 205) by acting as a repository for collections of intellectual ideas emanating from social, political and cultural institutions, such as law, art, and religion.

James Carey who, like Peters, heralds Dewey's importance to the field of mass communication, describes Dewey's conceptualization of communication as "action" or "a constellation of practices" (Carey, 1982, p. 31) through which meaning is collectively constructed. Carey (1989) argues that the foundation laid by Dewey's work is one of two "conceptions of communication" (p. 14) prominent in the field since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Carey (1989) calls Dewey's legacy the "ritual view of communication," which conceives of communication as "a symbolic process whereby

reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transformed” (p. 23). In this view, the world we live in takes shape through the creation and exchange of symbolic forms in a range of social, cultural, and political institutions, like art, science, religion, law, education, and the media; the products produced through these institutions bear the marks of “our knowledge of and attitudes toward reality” (Carey, 1989, p. 30). Because the symbolic activities undertaken by these institutions are “publicly observable activities that occur in historical time,” (p. 30) Carey argues that mass communication research that is founded on the ritual view examines the process through which symbols become meaningful.

In sum, Dewey’s vision of democracy is one in which individuals use communication to build and transform reality through interaction in their communities. If, as Peters (1989) argues, mass communication research is essentially about the possibilities for democracy, Dewey’s view suggests that the focus of communication research should be an examination of “the actual social process wherein significant symbolic forms are created, apprehended and used” (Carey, 1989, p.30). Peters and Carey both lament the fact that Dewey’s tradition is “the path not taken by American mass communication research” (Peters, 1989, p. 201); it was largely supplanted by the rise of social scientific discourses in the field. Below I describe that path that was taken in mass communication, but later return to Dewey’s tradition as I discuss his legacy in mass communication research.

Lippmann and the rise of Social Science. Walter Lippmann’s work was prominent during the 1920s and 1930s and was heavily influenced by the social scientific discourses popular in the Academy at the time. Carey suggests that Lippmann’s *Public Opinion* (1922) was so influential to the development of mass communication research

that he calls it “the founding book of American media studies” (1982, p. 23). Like Dewey, Lippmann experienced the social and political changes stemming from the Industrial Revolution, but Lippmann’s view of democracy and his embrace of the social scientific discourses of objectivity and rationality created a new tradition in mass communication research, largely displacing Dewey’s influence.

Unlike Dewey, who believed that democracy is created by individuals in conversation through communication, Lippmann viewed democracy more narrowly “as solely a form of government” in which “the citizen’s duty was to gain information about public issues” (Peters, 1989, p. 208). The news media were the primary source of individuals’ information in Lippmann’s democracy, and he argued that the quality of a democracy was dependent on the quality of the information individuals receive. Because Lippmann assumed that individuals did not uniformly have the critical skills necessary to analyze and interpret the information they received through the news media, his main concern was to ensure that the mass media accurately and objectively transmitted information to its audience. To insure the high quality of information transmitted by the news media, Lippmann suggested “the formation of independent cadres of social scientists working in quasi-public bureaucracies ... using the latest statistical procedures to produce veridical representations of reality – representations to be in turn transmitted to the waiting individuals who make up the public” (Carey, 1982, p. 27).

Lippmann “thought that democracy at best could be improved by providing the public with objective facts about the outside world” (Peters, 1989, p. 212). Communication, and news media specifically, therefore should be guided by scientifically-informed experts to transfer objective and independent information to the

masses. Carey argues that Lippmann's view of communication was not the active process that Dewey conceived; instead, Lippmann's communication was "a kind of seeing things aright" (1982, p. 24) or a form of vision that could be improved by the intervention of social scientists who had the tools to direct the media to project an objective and accurate picture of the social and political world. Peters (1989) and Carey (1982) argue that Lippmann's work, which conceptualized media messages as more powerful than the people receiving and interpreting them, contributed to "the depolitization of the public sphere" (Carey, 1982, p. 24), and changed the course of mass communication research.

Indeed, Lippman's work marked a change from Dewey's ritual view of communication to a transmission view of communication, which Carey (1989) argues has "dominated American thought since the 1920s" (p. 23). The transmission view of communication, based on the metaphor of transportation, conceptualizes communication as a "process whereby messages are transmitted and distributed in space for the control of distance and people" (p. 15). The transmission view deemphasizes the examination of the communicative processes through which people understand and experience reality to focus on the influence that media messages have on the way individuals see the world they live in. As the following discussion shows, the rise of the transmission model in mass communication research produced numerous studies focused upon the powerful effects mass media messages have on audiences.

The Payne Fund Studies, conducted from 1929 to 1932, built upon Lippmann's unwavering faith in social scientific mass communication research to study a growing entertainment medium: film. Named after the philanthropic foundation that provided financial support for the research, the Payne Fund Studies are of a series of thirteen

studies conducted during Lippmann's time that responded to the increased public concern over the effects of the booming movie industry (particularly on children). Primarily quantitative, the studies varied in method but centered on the ways in which movies' depiction of love, sex, and crime impacted the attitudes and behaviors of young people.

The studies fell into two broad categories: research in the first category sought to analyze the films' content and assess the size and composition of the audience; research in the second category aimed to determine the effects of exposure to the films under study (Lowry & DeFleur, 1995, p. 34). The studies confirmed the critics' fears and demonstrated that movies disturbed youths' sleep, provoked emotional arousal, affected performance and popularity in school, and contributed to delinquency; several of the studies suggested that other effects on children were indirect and long-term. Soon after the studies were published, the motion picture industry strengthened its self-censorship through the Hays Code; as a result, "the movies of the mid and late 1930s altered greatly the degree to which they portrayed socially controversial scenes" (Lowry & DeFleur, 1995, p. 52). While the techniques and findings of many of the projects that comprised the Payne Fund Studies are questioned today, "they were the great pioneering effort that established media research as a serious scientific field" (Lowry & DeFleur, 1995, p. 52).

Like Lippmann, Adorno (1954) expressed concern that increased stereotyping and the similarity of messages in "mass culture" texts would blur audiences' understanding of "reality" and would impair their capabilities for independent thought. Adorno believed that the changes stemming from industrialization gave the mass media enormous control over its audiences: "Today the commercial production of cultural goods has become streamlined, and the impact of popular culture upon the individual has

concomitantly increased” (p. 219). More concerned with the interplay of messages than any one particular message, Adorno argued that repeated exposure to television’s messages made audience members passive and gullible. Although Adorno describes television programs as “multilayered structures,” he suggests that all forms of popular media are similar in structure in that they are methods of psychological control and “tend to make for automatized reactions and to weaken the forces of individual resistance” (p. 216). Although Adorno is more closely aligned with Mass Society Theory than Powerful Effects, his work aligns with Lippmann’s in its construction of the mass media audience as passive and ignorant and of the media as all-powerful. Both scholars suggest social scientists are particularly well-equipped to analyze and critique the mass media’s messages and effects. In large part, the influence of Powerful Effects and the work of scholars like Lippman turned the developing field of mass communication away from work like Dewey’s, but, as I discuss below, it too was subject to revision.

Lazarsfeld and Limited Effects. Paul Lazarsfeld’s work (often produced collaboratively with Elihu Katz) was prominent in the 1940s and 1950s, while he was director of the Bureau of Applied Social Research at Columbia University. Lazarsfeld’s position aligns with Powerful Effects and Mass Society scholars because he was similarly concerned about the impact of increased industrialization and the dominance of mass media. However, while Lazarsfeld may have shared these concerns, his research findings suggest an alternate interpretation for the potential impact of media messages on audiences, an interpretation which Peters argues rescued “the public sphere from the media” (p. 215).

In their germinal book, *Personal Influence*, Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) suggest that the two dominant communication perspectives at the time, that communication will restore democracy by connecting citizens on a mass scale (reminiscent of Dewey) and that communication will destroy democracy by reducing the activity of the public (reminiscent of Lippmann) both give too much power to the media. The research of Katz and Lazarsfeld reveals that the intervening variables usually examined in the study of mass communication (exposure, content, channel or medium, and predispositions or attitudes) do not provide a full account of the flow of ideas from media to the people.

The effects model that Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) developed to account for intervening variables in the communication process is the “Two-Step Flow of Communication,” a theory that posits that “ideas, often, seem to flow *from* radio and print *to* opinion leaders and *from them* to the less active sections of the population” (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955, p. 32). Lazarsfeld’s work, particularly the Two-Step Flow model, marked the turn from “Powerful Effects” to “Limited Effects” and provided a correction to mass communication researchers who overlooked the role that personal relationships play in the relationship between media and audiences.

Peters (1989) argues that Lazarsfeld’s work shifted communication research from a view in which democracy was seen “as individuals participating in public discussion” (pp. 213-214) to a view of democracy as a social system. To examine democracy as a systemic process, Lazarsfeld focused more on the horizontal movement of power as influence within communities than on the vertical movement of power from the media to the public. In this way, Lazarsfeld differs from Lippman because he maintained that the media contribute to social discourse instead of highjacking it.

In essence, Lazarsfeld's work shows how mass media messages are disseminated through public discourse and demonstrates that conversations in communities mediate the effects of the mass media. While Lazarsfeld's work comes closer to Dewey's in terms of the importance of interpersonal relationships, Peters (1989) suggests that Lazarsfeld "assumes an image of democracy but does not argue it" (p. 216) because he did not directly discuss the importance of democracy or why community discussions would be important to it; instead he simply highlighted the fact that discussions were taking place.

Thus, although Lazarsfeld "concluded that it is a good thing for democracy that people can fend off media influence" (Katz, 1987, p. S26), Peters (1989) argues that the opinion leaders celebrated in "The Two-Step Flow" serve more as private channels for media messages than public interpreters of them. In short, Lazarsfeld revives aspects of Dewey's ritual view in his suggestion that the media provide topics for discussion among individuals; however, Lazarsfeld does not convincingly show that personal influence *intervenes* in the process of message dissemination or that the media facilitate knowledge, enlightenment and interaction.

Despite Peters' (1989) specific criticisms of Lazarsfeld's work, Peters argues that it was useful in continuing the progression of mass communication research. Although a number of useful traditions developed after Lazarsfeld, notably Uses and Gratifications and Cultivation Analysis, none of them ultimately or satisfactorily return to the questions and interests marked by Dewey's work. Thus, Peters concludes that Lazarsfeld's commitment to objectivity and facts obscured an honest evaluation of the values in mass communication research and produced an "inarticulateness on political and philosophical

matters” (p. 217) that remains an influential component of the field in contemporary times.

Seeking to answer broader questions about meaning and power, this project builds upon the tools and frameworks of the mass communication research tradition, asking many questions mass communication scholars have regularly asked about the media messages’ meanings, impact and influence. However, my project bears little resemblance to the post-Dewey mass communication traditions that Carey (1989) describes as part of the transmission view of communication. Rather, my project seeks to understand the role Martha Stewart’s media messages play in the lives of those who use them. Thus, my work is influenced by the ritual view of communication, derived in part from Dewey’s work; the questions Dewey asked about the media’s role in individuals’ observations of, participation in, and influence on the world around them are the questions I seek to explore. Though American mass communication research did not take Dewey’s path, Dewey’s approach is readily represented in cultural studies, the second influence on my project, which I describe in the following section.

British Cultural Studies

Thomas Lindlof (2002) describes cultural studies as an interdisciplinary, international, and controversial field. Cultural studies is interdisciplinary in that it strings together a number of different approaches and methods to realize its purpose—to examine the cultural, political and material consequences of the meanings constructed through the circulation of cultural forms to audiences with differing cultural competencies. Lindlof deems cultural studies controversial because its scholars investigate how cultural forms (*e.g.*, media texts) are the sites upon which ideological

struggles between dominant and marginalized groups take place, and use the knowledge created from such studies to generate “emancipatory knowledge” (Lindlof 1995, p. 53) and thus work to create change.

There is no specific or stable category of cultural forms that cultural studies scholars examine; instead, cultural studies aims to break the high/low culture distinction that considers popular forms of culture as unworthy of being seriously investigated. As a result, cultural studies scholars explore the impact of any cultural form that influences everyday life. Before turning to a discussion of the cultural studies approaches and that influence this study, I explore the formation of the CCCS and its theoretical foundations.

The foundations of British Cultural Studies. Stuart Hall (1980a) traces the foundations of cultural studies and the development of the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham to the 1960s work of Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, and E.P. Thompson. Hall refers to these works as “cultural interventions” (p. 16) built on the authors’ attempts to understand the social and cultural changes happening in the world around them, particularly in post-war Britain as it recovered from the impact of World War II. This new period brought “economic, political and cultural forces into new kinds of relation, into a new equilibrium” (p. 17). All three authors sought to understand the cultural changes provoked by this new equilibrium, in part by tracing the development of the changes with what Hall calls “a long, retrospective, historical glance” (p. 16).

The long glance Hoggart, Williams, and Thompson took represented a shift away from sociological and literary studies of culture that examined political, economic and social issues apolitically and in solitary pieces that never fully gave a sense of their

relation to the whole. To Raymond Williams (1961), the study of culture should be based upon “the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life” (p. 47).

Williams stresses that the goal of cultural analysis should be the reconstruction of the “felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time: a sense of the ways in which the particular activities combined into a way of thinking and living” (p. 48). This felt sense, which Williams calls a “structure of feeling,” is virtually inaccessible to those not living in that particular time, in part because it is reconfigured by each new generation. Despite its relative intangibility, Williams suggests that the key to understanding the complexity of culture lies in the ways in which its forms are related and that the analysis of cultural forms should not abstract them from their place in the larger cultural organization. In this way, Williams, like other cultural theorists writing in his time, uses the concept of “structure of feeling” to move the study of culture from the examination of abstracted parts to a connected whole.

The work of Hoggart, Williams, and Thompson provided a foundation for the development of cultural studies in British universities where “no place existed at that stage, whether in the social sciences or the humanities, where one could find the concept of culture seriously theorized” (Hall, 1990, p. 15). Further, “the political questions, the relationships, complex as they are, between culture and politics, were not a matter considered proper for study” (Hall, 1990, p. 15). The work that resulted from the creation of the CCCS in 1964 was built upon an interdisciplinary knowledge that sought to incorporate a range of theories or methods that proved useful in understanding the workings of power in culture.

Hall locates another influential moment for cultural studies in the 1970s, a time when a number of Western Marxist texts were translated into English and reprinted. The appropriation of Marxist thought gave cultural studies scholars additional tools for examining ideology and power. For instance, Hall (1980a) praises the work of structuralists like Louis Althusser for posing “certain absolutely critical questions for Cultural Studies” (p. 34). Althusser’s (1971) theory of ideology, articulated in “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” disrupted the Marxist notion of “determination in the last instance” by suggesting that a nation’s economic structure did not necessarily determine its social structure—instead, culture was “relatively autonomous” or at least not based solely on economic structures, but on ideological and political ones as well.

Althusser complicated Marx’s notion of “the State” by suggesting that the State’s power was built with two bodies: the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA), a unified body built of government, politics, legislation and law enforcement; and the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), which consist of multiple separate yet interrelated institutions such as education, religion, and the family. While the RSA works publicly through force and dominance, the ISAs work privately through diffusion of ideas to produce a submissive and skilled labor force. Particularly relevant to the developing field of cultural studies was Althusser’s argument that ideology has a material existence that can be examined through the functions of the ISAs and the actions and practices of concrete subjects, which would shed light on ideology’s role in “reproducing the conditions and relations necessary to the mode of production of class societies” (Hall, 1980a, p. 34).

Gramsci (1971) similarly reworked Marxist theories, particularly through his (re)conceptualization of hegemony. Like Williams, Gramsci was interested in the

examination of complex cultural forms and the ways in which cultural, political and ideological practices work to create “an equilibria in which the interests of the dominant group prevail” (1971, p. 199). He argued that a social group’s hegemony cannot be won solely through domination; the group principals must be intellectual and moral leaders as well. Thus, those in power maintain their leadership by winning the consent of the members of society through knowledge, which is spread through civil society (social and cultural institutions) and political society (the State). When the dominant group has secured political and intellectual leadership (which Gramsci believes can never be totally or finally won), the subordinate groups’ “common sense” reflects the interests and values of the dominant group.

Gramsci’s conceptualization of hegemony therefore helps to explain how pervasive and persuasive ideologies encourage subordinate groups to participate in their own domination. Like Williams and Althusser, Gramsci’s work offers a framework for conceptualizing how power circulates in culture. Hall (1980a) stresses that the effect of Gramsci’s work is “to show how cultural questions can be linked, in a non-reductionist manner, to other levels: it enables us to think of societies as complex formations, necessarily contradictory, always historically specific” (p. 36).

Because Gramsci’s notion of hegemony suggests that the forces at play in cultural production are relatively autonomous, hegemony is never fully achieved and the potential for counterhegemonic practices and ideas exists. An influential component of Gramsci’s interest in examining the roles cultural forms play in domination is to suggest the ways in which relations of power can be overthrown and “establish a new hegemony for the hitherto subordinate groups” (Gramsci, 1971, p. 204). Gramsci’s emphasis on change

greatly impacted the degree to which cultural studies focuses on political intervention. Hall (1996) cites Gramsci's notion of an "organic intellectual" and highlights two of its perquisites: to know more than traditional intellectuals (to *really* know), and to share this knowledge with those who are not intellectuals. Hall (1990) calls the work at the CCCS a "Gramscian Project" (p. 17) by which he means that "intellectuals themselves take responsibility for how the knowledge they produce is then transmitted to society; that they can't wash their hands of the game of translating knowledge into the practice of culture" (p. 18). Adopting Gramsci's drive for political change, cultural studies continues to emphasize that an intellectual's duties do not end with the role of knowledge production; the knowledge an intellectual produces must be accessible and offer practical ways to promote a just and equitable society.

Because the foundational work of Hoggart, Williams, and Thompson, and the work of Marxists like Althusser and Gramsci were primarily focused on questions of class and power, the bulk of early cultural studies work also addressed issues of economics and class status. This focus changed in the 1970s when feminist cultural studies scholars forced the issues of the feminist movement onto cultural studies' table; Hall remembers it as a productive "interruption" (1996, p. 248) that "forced a major rethink in every substantive area of work" (1980a, p. 38). The difficulty of placing questions of sex and gender at the forefront of cultural studies was recounted in the introduction to the eleventh issue of "Working Papers in Cultural Studies" entitled *Women Take Issue* (1978), written by the Women's Studies Group at the CCCS. Race, sexuality, nationality and other "interruptions" followed and subsequently found their place in the cultural studies agenda, making it, as Douglas Kellner (2003) describes,

“multiculturalist,” or focused on demonstrating “how culture reproduces certain forms of racism, sexism, and biases against members of subordinate classes, social groups, or alternate lifestyles” (p. 11).

Reflecting on more than twenty years of cultural studies work, Richard Johnson (1996), director of the CCCS after Stuart Hall, defines the contemporary work of cultural studies in “What is Cultural Studies Anyway?” He suggests that cultural studies is an “intellectual and political tradition” (p. 41) whose goal is to abstract, describe and reconstitute the social forms through which people live their lives. To make this abstract notion more concrete, Johnson presents a model of cultural products in circulation, which he calls a circuit of the “production, circulation, and consumption of cultural products” (p. 46). Johnson’s circuit reflects three relatively distinct areas of investigation in cultural studies: production-based studies, text-based studies, and studies of lived culture.

Production-based studies examine the systems of production and distribution from which texts originate, text-based studies analyze cultural forms, and studies of lived culture investigate the everyday contexts in which people make sense of texts. While each of the three areas has specific merits, Johnson (1996) stresses that “the ultimate object of cultural studies is ... *the social life of subjective forms at each moment of their circulation*” (p. 62). Therefore, examining each moment in the circuit singularly yields a relatively incomplete picture; work that unites all of the moments in the circuit is the goal of cultural studies.

Thus, the goal of cultural studies continues to be the construction of a comprehensive picture of the ways in which power works through cultural forms by examining their production and reception. Part of cultural studies’ utility for the study of

power is the fact that it is interdisciplinary and offers a range of theories and approaches to the study of power in culture. Because power has proven to work in diverse ways, the study of power must employ diverse methods to trace its influence.

Cultural studies provides many useful frameworks and tools for understanding and investigating the complex forces at play in Martha Stewart's popularity. A particularly significant and useful cultural studies approach to the study of the circulation of power in cultural forms, and one Lindlof (2002) suggests has had vital importance for the study of communication, is reception or audience studies. Reception study, which forms the foundation for my project, is a specific approach to audience research that uses interviews to examine the interaction between text and audience—the site on which cultural studies scholars argue meaning is constructed. It is to this approach that I turn next.

Reception Studies. As Johnson (1996) notes, in cultural studies, a great deal of work has focused on the ways media messages are produced, disseminated and understood, especially since the publication of Hall's (1980b) essay, "Encoding/Decoding," a critique of traditional mass communication models that conceptualize communication as a closed unilinear circuit. Hall rejects the closed unilinear circuit model (which was largely developed through quantitative effects research) because he believes it did not usefully illustrate the complex process through which ideologies are produced and disseminated through the media. Specifically, Hall (1994) stresses that he wanted to move away from traditional models that suggest media messages have an originating moment. Because Hall believes that we are always already situated in discourse, and the discursive production and reception of messages continually

reproduce social meanings, there is no one place where communication begins or ends. Therefore, Hall constructed a model that represents the continuous, articulated but distinct, moments in message production and dissemination.

As the title of Hall's (1980b) germinal essay suggests, encoding and decoding are two significant moments in his model. Hall argued that social, cultural and political discourses, in addition to the industry conventions and discourses of television production, work together to produce (encode) a meaningful text. This text, produced as meaningful, is then received (decoded) by audience members who understand it through their own access to social, cultural and political discourses. Using Hall's model, the encoding of a text can be examined through textual or semiotic analysis, and the decoding of a text through audience interviews or ethnography.

In Hall's (1980b) configuration, the discursive form of the message has a privileged position in the circuit as the only moment that is materially structured and fixed; yet, like the other moments in the circuit, it has no power to fully determine its influence on the other moments in the circuit. Each of the moments in the circuit contributes to a text's meanings. For Hall, in order for messages to have ideological influence, they must be produced as meaningful discourse and then meaningfully decoded; thus, meaning is produced where encoding and decoding practices meet, at the decoded text. Further, the circuit Hall theorizes is complete only when the meanings taken from the media texts are translated into social practices.

Because Hall (1980b) conceptualized encoding and decoding as relatively autonomous, encoding does not determine decoding; instead encoding structures, but cannot finally fix, a media text's meaning. However, Hall (1994) argues that it is through

encoding that ideology attempts to reproduce itself; thus, he wanted the model to reflect the asymmetry of the power relations between media producers and media audiences. He labeled the meaning produced by encoders' attempts to structure a text's meaning "preferred."

While media producers attempt to fix meaning through the media text, Hall (1980b) believes their attempts are never entirely effective; thus, polysemy, or the possibility for audiences to interpret a media text in ways media producers had not intended exists in the circuit.¹ Hall (1980b) suggests that although producers structure a preferred reading of the text, audiences may interpret a text's meaning differently. To explain the ways in which audiences might potentially understand the encoded message, Hall defines three viewer positions: 1. Dominant—the audience member understands the preferred reading and reads it as the encoders intended; 2. Negotiated—the audience member understands the preferred reading yet modifies this meaning with his or her own frameworks of understanding; 3. Oppositional—the audience member understands the preferred reading, but uses his or her own frameworks of understanding to produce a reading that is in essence a critique of the preferred meaning. Hall (1994) posits that most of the time, most audience members inhabit the negotiated position.

Because the preferred meaning is a derivative of the audience members' interpretation of the text, it reflects decoders' memberships in interpretive communities and the cultural competencies developed from their locations in the social world. It is through examination of the audience's understanding of a text that the analyst can see if encoders' attempts to solidify a text's meaning have been successful. The practices of

encoding and decoding both reproduce and reconfigure the ideologies in circulation in the larger social world in which media texts are constructed and understood.

Hall's (1980b) model truly reconceptualized the ways scholars understood mediated message production and meaning making, and called upon scholars to use this model to produce a more complicated understanding of the connected, but distinct, moments in the process. Over time, Hall's model has been tested, criticized and revised, but its utility for thinking through the ways in which power circulates through media texts has not changed. I use Hall's Encoding/Decoding model as the foundation of my project, and incorporate the tradition of reception study that it developed, to examine the ideologies at play in Martha Stewart's media messages and the ways in which Stewart's audiences interpret them.

Feminist Theory and Research

Feminist scholarship, which investigates the social construction of gender and the ways in which power infiltrates the most intimate aspects of people's lives, grew out of a critique of the foundations of "traditional" research. Reinharz (1992) traces the development of feminist scholarship in "Principles of Feminist Research" to the early 1970s when academia began feeling the effects of the social upheaval of the 1960s outside the Academy, and the critique of positivism in the social sciences inside the Academy. The feminist scholarship that emerged from the early 1970s was founded on a critique of the ways in which scientific discourses, far from being neutral and objective as regularly claimed, were biased, androcentric, ethnocentric and heterosexist and distorted the experiences of those under study. Feminist scholars argued that scientific research produced partial knowledge that worked as violence against non-dominant groups,

excluding them and silencing their voices. In this sense, feminist scholarship offered a revision, a transformation of academic knowledge that would encourage new ways of thinking about the processes and goals of theory and research.

As a relatively new area of inquiry, feminist research has experienced growing pains in the course of becoming institutionalized in the Academy. Below I describe how feminist research has developed generally and in the field of communication. In the process, I examine three important components at the heart of feminist research in general and my project in particular: an overtly political agenda that aims to change social, political and cultural conditions, a reflexivity that reminds feminist researchers to avoid reiterating the biases of those they critique, and an insistent focus on the ideological construction of gender and its many intersections with race, class, sexuality, nationality, etc.

The Foundations of Feminist Research. Sandra Harding (1987) reflects upon the impact of feminist scholarship and details the changes feminist scholarship has provoked in the social sciences. She argues that feminism has not produced any new methods and that there is no specifically feminist method or technique for gathering evidence; Harding believes feminist scholarship has, however, influenced methodology (a theory about the process of conducting research) and epistemology (a theory of knowledge) by asserting that women can be knowers and that traditional social scientific research produces partial knowledge. Harding asserts that feminist research cannot simply add women to the knowledge created by traditional social science, and emphasizes that analyses of gender must examine the ways in which “women’s and men’s experiences, desires, and interests differ within every race, class and culture” (p. 7). Harding argues that feminist

scholarship has produced three distinct contributions to traditional methodology and epistemology that include constructing women's experiences as worthy and important sources of information, insisting that research about women should be produced to improve women's lives, and positioning researchers on the same plane as those they research in the hopes that they can help their subjects better understand their conditions.

In *Getting Smart*, Patti Lather (1991) suggests that feminists use poststructuralist theories to amend, revitalize and further feminist research, which Lather defines as research that puts “the social construction of gender at the center of one's inquiry” (p. 71). Lather uses postmodern theories to support her argument that praxis and reflexivity must be at the center of feminist methodologies. Building on Gramsci's work, Lather, like Harding, maintains that feminists must use the knowledge produced through their research to improve the lives of those they study. Similarly, Lather argues that as feminist research becomes more mainstream in the academy, it runs the risk of becoming as exclusionary as the traditional social sciences it originally critiqued. To guard against this, Lather suggests feminist scholars practice reflexivity by turning their analytical tools upon themselves. She claims that to maintain the relevance and utility of feminist scholarship—in research and in activism—feminists must be reflexive about the disciplines and institutions with which they are aligned and self-reflexive about their own positions and techniques.

Judith Butler (1992) in “Contingent Foundations” also urges feminist scholars to be reflexive. Butler warns that foundations are produced through exclusion and regulation and often at the cost of allowing different positions and ideas to develop and flourish. She stresses that “in the very struggle toward enfranchisement and democratization, we might

adopt the very models of domination by which we were oppressed, not realizing that one way domination works is through the regulation and production of subjects” (p. 14).

Butler’s concern is that if foundations are not continually evaluated and reevaluated, they will exclude difference. Butler stresses that the inclusion of difference is a key component of feminist politics and reminds feminist scholars that the disagreement produced through difference strengthens and forwards feminist scholarship.

Problematizing a foundation of feminist scholarship was one of Butler’s goals in *Gender Trouble* (1990). In it she argues that feminists have not seen the ways in which producing “woman” as a foundation for feminist struggles has impeded feminist theory and activism. She argues that there is no prediscursive, natural “woman” for which feminism fights and thus there is no prediscursive or natural unity among women. Instead, she argues that gender works to produce sex as natural, and that this production has no one origin, but instead multiple origins based on the motives of a number of political and social institutions. From Butler’s perspective, gender is a performance—it produces what it represents through repetition and regulation. She suggests that in order to counter the limiting effects of these discourses, feminists should practice gender trouble, or “perform” in ways that demonstrate the variance and multiplicity of genders. Prior and subsequent critiques by feminists like Gloria Anzaldua (1988), and bell hooks (1989), among many others, pushed feminist scholars to examine the ways in which their scholarship and activism was focused on the lives of white, middle-class, Western, heterosexual women. They similarly challenged feminists to broaden their thinking and examine the ways in which gender is intersected by race and ethnicity, class, nationality, and sexuality.

Joan Scott (1992) challenges a major tenet of feminist scholarship: the inclusion of women's experiences as an important source of information. Scott suggests that experience can no longer be taken as unquestionable proof in feminist scholarship because evidence, like gender, is constructed and produced through discourse. She argues instead that experience should be deconstructed and used to demonstrate the ways in which power works through discourse. Including women's experiences as legitimate data in research was an important move at a time when women's experiences were largely absent in research and society in general; however, examining the constructedness of experience is now possible due to the fact that women have a louder, if still marginalized, voice in the Academy. Scott's arguments about the constructed nature of experience extends the calls for reflexivity by the feminist scholars discussed above and serves as yet another reminder to be wary of foundations.

Feminist research must continually trace and unravel the social construction of gender and the ways in which power infiltrates the most intimate aspects of experience, and make sure feminist scholarship is used to generate social and political change. The foundations constructed through the institutionalization of feminist research offer guidance and a common framework to feminist scholars, but also run the risk of excluding voices and appropriating the discriminatory tenets of the social sciences that feminist research critiques. I believe this can be a productive tension, and, as I discuss below, feminist communication scholars have used this tension to encourage scholars to maintain reflexivity in their work and continually interrogate that which they take for granted.

Feminist Research in Communication. Though feminist scholarship began to influence the field of Communication nearly a decade after it entered the Academy, the trajectory that feminist scholarship took in Communication—from laying basic foundations to working to be reflexive about what tenets should be considered foundational—closely follows feminist scholarship’s path in academia in general. In “Feminist Scholarship and ‘The Woman Question’ in the Academy,” Lisa McLaughlin (1995) describes that feminist theory and research entered the field of communication around 1980, and “experienced a critical organizational moment in 1986” (p. 153) as women’s interest groups were added to disciplinary organizations and special issues of disciplinary journals focused on feminist scholarship. Feminist scholarship brought with it new perspectives and new sources of data for the study of communication.

Lana Rakow (1986), writing in one of the special issues to which McLaughlin refers, argues that the then current research on sex differences and the content and effects of the media did not begin to critique the ways in which gender and gendered experiences are produced by power. She argues that when feminist research focuses upon the ways in which gender is socially constructed and manifests itself in knowledge and practices, feminist research will truly add to and transform the field of Communication. Similarly, in “A Feminist Paradigm for Communication Research,” Margaret Gallagher (1989) rejects the “adding in [women]” (p. 76) approach that served as an unsophisticated correction to the exclusion of women in and through research. She instead suggests that feminists must commit to a thorough revision of Communication, from its research practices to its theories to its findings.

These critiques are reiterated in Kathryn Cirkse's (1996) "Feminism after Ferment." In this article, Cirkse reflects upon the 1983 *Journal of Communication* special issue that evaluated work in the field of Communication, entitled "Ferment in the Field," which Cirkse argues completely ignored feminist scholarship. Her article, aiming to correct this telling oversight, traces the paths of feminist scholarship in communication from 1983 to 1992. She found that while many studies focused on gender inequity in the study of the media, the majority of articles containing keywords indicative of feminist research were studies of gender differences that simply discussed men's and women's differences without an analysis of the reasons for and impact of those differences. Specifically, she found that "precious few pieces are taking account of women's standpoints of multiply determined identities, and fewer still propose or include any activist orientation or involve the people being studied in the determination of the research process" (p. 158). Cirkse stresses that future feminist research in communication should put women and women's experiences at the center of every project; should use women's experiences as data and evidence; should be action-oriented and focused on change; should examine power inequities based on gender; and should involve the researched in its development and analysis.

Aldoory and Toth (2001) evaluated three years of feminist work in Communication and while they found an increasing number of articles published in mainstream communication journals, few of the studies "incorporated the characteristics suggested for feminist scholarship—that is, collaboration, reflexivity, diversity, and praxis or social change" (p. 354). They were particularly critical of the lack of diversity of feminist communication scholars' work, and stressed that future research should more

explicitly examine the combined impact of gender, sexuality, class, education, race, and nationality.

Dow and Condit (2005) performed a similar analysis of feminist research, examining twelve Communication journals between 1998 and 2003. They stressed that while the field often labels any research about women as feminist, they believe that scholarship should be evaluated by its “focus and function” (p. 449) instead of content; therefore, they argue that feminist communication research is “research that studies communication theories and practices from a perspective that ultimately is oriented toward the achievement of ‘gender justice,’ a goal that takes into account the ways that gender always already intersects with race, ethnicity, sexuality, and class” (p. 449).

Like Aldoory and Toth (2001), Dow and Condit (2005) emphasize that the number and quality of feminist articles in the journals they analyzed suggests a “substantial accomplishment” (p. 467) for a relatively new subfield, and also believe that feminist scholarship has achieved a mainstream visibility in the study of communication. Dow and Condit celebrate the growth in feminist communication scholarship that studies race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, masculinity and globalism; but believe, like Aldoory and Toth, that the field needs more work that seriously incorporates and interrogates these and other important components of and contributors to gender.

In many ways, my interest in Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia began with an interest in Stewart’s popularity with and impact on female audience members. Feminist scholarship, which offers permission and encouragement to take up topics and issues not deemed serious and worthy of study, was thus an important component of my project, allowing me to ask questions not traditionally asked. It became clear very quickly,

however, that gender alone was not at the center of Stewart's popularity; instead gender was inextricably tied to race, class, and sexuality. In my project, I have aimed to incorporate the reflexivity stressed by scholars like Lather, Butler and Scott, and have worked to ensure that my findings live up to the measures provided by Aldoory and Toth, and Dow and Condit. My work is guided by many feminist research exemplars in cultural studies and mass communication, discussed in the following chapters, and my hope is to provide an analysis that extends feminist communication scholarship and illuminates the ways in which power works to structure gender, race, class and sexuality.

Methods

Rationale for Textual and Ideological Analysis

In *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*, David Morley (1992) reflects upon the utility of Hall's (1980b) Encoding/Decoding model to study the ways in which audiences make meaning from media texts. Synthesizing the model, Morley writes that "the parameters of a text's meaning" are defined by two constraining factors: "the internal structures and mechanisms of the text/message/programme ... and the cultural background of the reader/recipient/viewer" (1992, p. 76). As described above, what sets Encoding/Decoding apart from other approaches that similarly seek to understand the ways in which media messages are constructed by producers and understood by audiences is that the model rejects the notion that audiences simply receive (or do not receive) the messages sent to them by producers. Instead, the model interrogates the cultural processes of sending and receiving and posits that a text is meaningful only at the point where the two processes meet, thus necessitating the study of both the text and its audience.

Therefore, an examination of a text's encoding without its decoding offers a limited perspective on the meaning of the text. While the model emphasizes that media texts are polysemic and allow audiences to read many possible meanings instead of one true or "real" meaning in a text, Hall (1994) argues that media producers (due to their control over the media and its messages) have more power over a message's potential meaning than viewers. In the process of encoding, message producers, in their desire to communicate effectively, construct a text in such a way that it will "invite certain readings and block others" (Morley, 1992, p. 86); though this process of preferring one potential reading over others is never fully successful, it does assert a particular structure on the text. In order to fully understand the meanings that result from the interaction of a media message and its audience, the analyst must examine the ways in which a text is structured and the ideological messages that result from that structuring.

To understand the process of encoding, the analyst performs a type of decoding through textual analysis that aims to uncover codes and ideologies used in the preferring process. Lewis (1983) argues that the shape encoders or producers give to a text is based on two different structures of meaning: the primary is the level of the social, cultural, and political world in which the producers live and work, and the secondary consists of the professional codes specific to the media industry in which the message was produced. Morley (1992) similarly advises that there are at least two levels of messages within a text that need to be examined: explicit messages or the most obvious, straightforward messages, and latent messages, communicated through "implication, assumption or connotation" (p. 82). Understanding these levels of meaning in MSLO's media messages is the goal of Chapter Three.

Because Encoding/Decoding posits that a text gains meaning the moment it is read by a member of its audience, the meaning of any text cannot be fully understood simply through a researcher's interrogation of a text's construction—the interpretations made by its audience must also be investigated. While my focus in Chapter Three is an analysis of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia's messages and products, in Chapter Four, I examine the ways in which members of Stewart's audience made sense of her magazine, television programs, merchandised products and website.

Textual and Ideological Analysis

Chapter Three is based upon textual analysis and ideological analysis of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia's magazine, television programs and website, with reference to other offerings, including Stewart's books, newspaper column, radio segment, and licensed products.² Additionally, I supplemented my analysis with the words of cultural observers writing in popular and academic sources. My sample is by no means exhaustive, but I included a broad sample of Stewart's most popular messages through a variety of MSLO's offerings, with a focus on Stewart's magazine and television programs.

Martha Stewart Living magazine was my primary focus as it is the company's flagship publication, is the oldest and most profitable of Stewart's offerings, and draws the largest audience. Its format—print—also made it the most accessible of the three media forms I examined. My analysis of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine began with a trip to the Library of Congress to examine the earliest issues from 1990 and 1991. Over time, and through the wonder of eBay, I obtained one hundred and twenty-nine issues of *Martha Stewart Living*, beginning with the premier issue in Winter 1990 and ending with

the August 2004 issue (released prior to Stewart's public announcement that she would voluntarily report to Alderson Women's Prison and before the removal of Stewart's presence in the magazine in preparation for Stewart's incarceration as a result of her involvement in the ImClone insider trading scandal).

To study MSLO's television programs, I videotaped twelve weeks of programming between September 2002 and July 2004 on WFSB in Connecticut, KSDK and KNLJ in Missouri, the Food Network, Home and Garden Television (HGTV), and the Style Network. My television sample consists of thirty-nine episodes of *Martha Stewart Living*, eighteen episodes of *From Martha's Kitchen*, fourteen episodes of *From Martha's Home*, and seven episodes of *From Martha's Garden*. Repeated visits to marthastewart.com over the course of my study supplemented my analysis of MSLO's magazine and television programs. The archive of the older versions of marthastewart.com on the Wayback Machine (<http://www.archive.org>), allowed me to access versions of Stewart's web site no longer available through MSLO (including versions produced December 1998 to August 2007).

In her discussion of the use of ideological criticism in the analysis of television programs, Mimi White (1992) describes ideologies as "...beliefs that are taken as 'natural' when in fact they perpetuate the status quo" (p. 165). Because the artifacts of a culture (a media message, for instance) retain the traces of the ideas, beliefs and values of that culture, ideological analysis seeks to examine a text to understand its relation to the cultural moment in which it was produced and distributed. White stresses that instead of looking for a particular message in a media text, the focus of ideological criticism is "delineating the range of issues and questions raised within a program or across a set of

texts....” (p. 182). John Fiske (1990) similarly argues that ideological analysis “tends to focus on the coherence of texts, the way that all their elements come together to tell the same story ” (p. 184).

Ideological analysis is more an approach than a method, as Mimi White (1992) suggests: “ideological criticism draws on the methods and insights of different approaches to textual analysis ... to discern what meanings are made available through the medium and its programs” (p. 172). David Silverman (2001) clarifies the value of textual analysis for uncovering the traces of cultural influence on cultural artifacts when he describes that “... the role of textual researchers is not to criticize or assess particular texts in terms of apparently ‘objective’ standards. It is rather to analyse how they work to achieve particular effects – to identify the elements used and the functions these play” (pp. 121-122).

Thus while ideological criticism forms the foundation for my project’s approach, textual analysis is the method I use to tease out the ideological messages in Stewart’s media messages. Textual analysis, as Richard Johnson (2004) indicates, is a method focused on understanding the construction of a text. To Johnson, the process involves looking “for the underlying, deep structure of a text – the determining elements that shape it yet are not immediately apparent or are so taken for granted that they seem inevitable” (p. 158). Though Alan McKee (2003) offers that an analysis of a text is essentially an “educated guess,” he offers that “... what makes us ‘educated’, in our ‘educated guesses at the likely interpretations of a text’, is our knowledge of relevant intertexts: the same ones that audiences have on hand when they interpret that text” (pp. 92-93). The four “intertexts” that McKee believes will strengthen one’s analysis of a text

are other texts by the same author, the genre of the text, publicly circulated texts that comment upon the text under examination, and the wider public context in which the text appeared (pp. 93-100). I draw from all four intertexts in my analysis of *Martha Stewart Living*.

To lay a foundation for my analysis of MSLO's texts, I carefully examined each of the magazine issues, television programs, and web site versions in my sample, taking notes on two broad areas: structure and subjects. Notes about structure were taken to describe the foundational elements of Stewart's magazine issues, television programs and web site components: their regular and special features, the order in which these features were arranged (see Appendices A and B), and the mode of address used to convey the information contained in each of the features. My hope was that exploring these foundational elements would help to uncover the functions they serve in the composition of and construction of meaning in each text; for instance, the order of the articles and segments in Stewart's magazine and television programs offered some hints as to their importance.

Notes about the subject matter of the magazines, programs and website versions I analyzed consisted of similarities and dissimilarities in the topics of each article, episode, or feature I examined. As McKee (2003) suggests, some features of a text are more significant than others; therefore, analysts "pick out the bits of the text that, based on your knowledge of the culture within which it's circulated, appear to you to be relevant to the question you're studying" (p. 75). The "bits of text" I found most significant included messages about gender, race and class that emerged from the topics of MSLO's media messages; together with my analysis of MSLO's texts' structures, these themes are the

focus of Chapter Three. MSLO's reuse of material, known as "leveraging" (discussed in Chapter One), ensured a predictable amount of overlap between subjects covered in Stewart's magazine and television programs; in fact, several of the episodes in my sample of *From Martha's Kitchen*, *From Martha's Garden*, and *From Martha's Home*, included the exact same segments found also in episodes of the one hour long *Martha Stewart Living*; many of the episodes of Stewart's television programs I examined also paralleled topics in *Martha Stewart Living* magazine.

Finally, in my analysis I included intertexts from each of the four categories McKee (2003) names (additional texts from the same author, features of the text's genre, public comments about the texts, and the context in which the texts appeared) in order to provide context for my reading of MSLO's texts in hopes of making "it clear that other people might have made such an interpretation – that you haven't imposed a reading on a text where nobody else would see it" (McKee, 2003, p. 70). Together, these levels of analysis compose my exploration of the meanings of the messages produced by Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. In the next section, I describe how I used reception study to understand the ways Stewart's fans made sense of *Martha Stewart Living*.

Rationale for Reception Studies

The study of the meaning in media texts is necessarily linked to the study of the audiences of media texts. As Radway (1986) argues, audience research is undertaken to "attempt to understand another's world from within because it can get us closer to an understanding of the way ideology structures consciousness and hence closer to finding ways to challenge particular ideologies and the particular consciousness they produce" (pp. 105-106). Through discussion, the researcher seeks to understand the ways in which

audience members receive and interpret the messages to which they are exposed; audience members from different subcultural groups serve as indicators of how audience members understand messages similarly or differently based upon life experiences.

Many cultural studies and mass communication scholars argue that messages generate meaning through interaction with audience members. Morley (1992) clearly outlines this assertion in *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*. Positioned theoretically and methodologically against traditional effects and uses and gratifications research, which suggest that viewers are either mostly passive (effects) or mostly active (uses and gratifications) in their interaction with media texts, Morley posits that viewers participate in “an active process of decoding or interpretation, not simply a passive process of ‘reception’ or ‘consumption’ of messages” (p. 76). The meanings produced from the interaction between text and viewers are therefore necessarily influenced by the knowledges viewers possess that have developed from their experiences, their positions in society, and the people with whom they are in contact—in short, the viewers’ cultural competencies (and the associations among them).

All viewers, in varying degrees, possess and understand television’s basic codes, if only unconsciously, and use these codes to understand what they are seeing, hearing or reading. Importantly, media texts communicate more than what they explicitly present; as Morley (1992) argues, media texts “also contain latent messages through implication, assumption or connotation” (p. 82). As a result, audiences learn ideologies, or “general ‘definitions of the order of things’,” from what is both present and absent in media messages (p. 79-80). As Justin Lewis (1991) notes, the important move cultural studies

makes with reference to media studies is to recognize the struggle for power implicit in media and television production and consumption.

The Encoding/Decoding model and the debates that have both amended and extended it (see Hall, 1994; Morley, 1992; Lewis, 1983), serve as inspiration for my project—I am looking to understand MSLO's messages (as encoded), the way Stewart's audience members make sense of them (through decoding), and the cultural contexts in which these processes take place. As a result, this study incorporates three areas of inquiry: broad cultural/social analysis, textual analysis and reception study.

Next, I explain the details of my reception study, in which I sought those who self-described as Martha Stewart fans in hopes of understanding the meanings they make from Stewart's messages. I also spoke to those who were interested in Stewart, but did not consider themselves fans of Stewart in order to understand the rejection of Stewart's media texts and persona. Importantly, I organized groups of different genders, classes, races and sexualities in the hopes of representing a broad range of Stewart's large and seemingly diverse audience.

Reception Studies

The research I discuss in Chapter Four is based upon a focus group interview model in which I gathered data about audiences' interests in and feelings about Martha Stewart and her media offerings through open-ended discussion with groups of participants (see Lewis, 1991; Lunt & Livingstone, 1996; Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). All participants were selected from the New England region of the United States, the home base of and frequent reference point in products produced by Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. All but one group interview took place in a variety of locations in

Massachusetts, though not all participants were Massachusetts residents. Several participants traveled from Connecticut and Rhode Island. One interview was held in an America Online chat room and consisted of four participants from Massachusetts and one participant from Connecticut.

I conducted a pilot interview in April 1999, and eight focus group interviews between October 2002 and July 2004. I aimed to include participants with a variety of demographic characteristics and organized several groups based on participants' gender, race, class and sexuality. My hope was that including a range of people from a number of different backgrounds, presumably with different interests and experiences, would help to uncover continuities and discontinuities in attitudes about Stewart and her media offerings. In total, I interviewed thirty-eight people in groups of between two and six; the small number of participants in several of the interviews make them small group interviews rather than focus group interviews by nature of definition—though the interview procedures remain the same (see Lindlof & Taylor, 2002; Lewis, 1991).

I used a variety of techniques to solicit potential participants. In several instances, I used the snowball sampling method (Lindlof & Taylor 2002), in which the researcher targets a person who represents the demographic characteristics of the group sought and asks if she or he would coordinate a group meeting of peers. With this method, I successfully reached willing participants through acquaintances of family members and colleagues.

In many instances I reached participants by posting information about my project and my need for interviewees on online list serves or online discussion groups. One group developed after I posted information about my study on the bulletin boards on

marthastewart.com; others developed from postings to discussion groups focused on issues unrelated to Martha Stewart or homekeeping, such as racial, gender or sexual identity. One group developed when a Massachusetts newspaper wrote an article about my study and I was contacted by several readers.

Thirty-five participants were female, three were male; their ages ranged from the twenties to over seventy. One participant was African American, two were Asian, one was South Asian, and two were multiracial; the remaining thirty-two participants were white. Four participants had a high school diploma, twenty-one completed a college degree, and thirteen had a graduate or professional degree. A majority of participants had a household income that fell between \$50,000 and \$75,000. Twenty-five participants were heterosexual, three were gay, six were lesbians, three were bisexual and one identified as celibate. Racial and income distribution of the thirty-eight interviewees closely resembled US Census data for Massachusetts from the year 2000. The education levels of my participants were slightly higher than US Census data; sexual identity is not collected in Census data (Massachusetts quickfacts, 2004).³

Each small group interview was held in a private location—usually a university meeting room or a conference room at a local business. The location was selected to insure privacy and encourage the participants to speak freely. A small payment was offered to each interviewee though most refused it; food and beverages were provided during each of the interviews.

Before each of the nine small-group interviews, I asked each participant to fill out a brief questionnaire [included in Appendix E] designed to gather information about the frequency with which the interview participants read or watched Martha Stewart's

magazines or television programs, visited MarthaStewart.com, and purchased Martha Stewart's books, CDs or licensed products. Questions about with whom the interviewees discussed Martha Stewart were included, as were questions about demographic characteristics. Importantly, each questionnaire asked if and why or why not the interviewee considered her or himself a fan of Martha Stewart.

Each of the small group interviews lasted at least two hours. The sessions began with a screening of an approximately fifteen minute collection of television segments taken from *Martha Stewart Living*, *From Martha's Kitchen* and *From Martha's Garden* [for a description of the program segments, see Appendix G]. I included the program clips to give the participants, many of whom had not met prior to the small group interview, some common ground on which to base our discussions. After screening the program segments, I introduced myself to the participants and asked each of them to introduce themselves, including whatever information about their personal lives and their possible identifications as Martha Stewart fans they felt comfortable disclosing.

After introductions, the discussion began. While I used a list of open-ended interview questions [included in Appendix F] as a framework for the discussion, I let the interview participants dictate the direction of the discussion. The focus group discussions were loosely structured around questions developed from my analysis of Stewart's television show, magazine and public persona, allowing for responses and conversations to naturally evolve. Building upon information collected in my pilot interview, I began with general questions that required respondents to evaluate the program segments they had just viewed. From there, I moved to more specific questions that dealt with their opinions of Martha Stewart as a figure and of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia's media

offerings and purpose. In the course of the interviews, my participants meandered to topics and ideas I had not anticipated. Most of the time these new directions were useful and interesting; however, sometimes I found it necessary to gently pull the group discussion back to the topic at hand.⁴

Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed soon after the interview took place. The resulting transcripts totaled over four hundred pages. In order to examine the transcripts for similarities and dissimilarities in both what was said and not said in each group, I developed labels for commonalities in each of the interviews; these were written directly in the margins of the transcripts. The questions guiding my development of the labels included: What were common themes in each of the groups? What differed in each group? What topics provoked or stifled conversation? Did the participants in each group seem to agree with each other?

Once relevant phrases and passages were identified, I grouped similarly labeled items using what Lindlof & Taylor (2002) call “the grounded theory approach” (pp. 218-222). By comparing labeled utterances to one another, I constructed broader categories of audience responses, most of which were loosely based on pre-determined demographic categories, such as gender, race, class, and sexuality. Additional categories, including types of Martha Stewart fans and reactions to the ImClone scandal, developed through themes repeated in the group interviews. In grouping labeled material this way, I organized general patterns in conversation and made comparisons to see if and how the differences in demographic characteristics and exposure to Martha Stewart within and across groups affect fans’ attitudes toward Martha Stewart and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. These labels coalesce in Chapter Four and serve as the structure for my

discussion of fans' responses to *Martha Stewart Living*; each of the headings and subheadings in Chapter Four represent labels that emerged from my analysis.

Conclusion

Together, American mass communication, British cultural studies, and feminist scholarship serve as the foundation of my project. Using methods derived from this foundation, I based my project on Hall's Encoding/Decoding model. I employed textual and ideological analysis to examine the ways in which Stewart's texts are encoded and used focus group interviews to investigate the meanings Stewart's fans made of her magazines and television programs. Combining these theories and methods, I examined the many ways that Martha Stewart is a cultural producer: as the CEO of a successful media corporation, building an empire through innovative business ideas; as the creative force behind each of her media endeavors constructing content, entertaining audiences and producing trends; and as a media celebrity, admired, loathed and discussed publicly. The findings from my analysis of Stewart's texts are discussed in Chapter Three, and my analysis of fans' responses to Martha Stewart is presented in Chapter Four; both chapters investigate the meanings constructed around the Martha Stewart phenomenon.

Notes

¹ David Morley's (1992) work on *Nationwide* narrowed the scope of Hall's suggestions that media texts are polysemic. Morley argued that despite the fact that it is possible for audiences to understand a text in ways different than producers intended, "*all* meanings do not exist 'equally' in the message" (p. 86). For Morley, the term "structured polysemy" better represents the ways in which decoders' abilities to read a text in an unintended way are narrowed by the structures encoded by the producers and by the social, political, and cultural knowledge of the decoders.

² I consider myself to be a member of Stewart's audience, and my exposure to her products persisted over the course of the study and included my informal viewership of her television programs, use of her cookbooks and purchases from her catalog and Kmart products.

³ For a general description of participant demographics and a detailed description of each participant, see Appendix D.

⁴ In addition to the nine small group interviews, I conducted twenty-three interviews in Kansas City, Missouri, in February 2005 with individuals auditioning for *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart*. The interviews were brief; most lasted no more than 10 minutes. Interview questions centered on participants' reasons for auditioning as well as their feelings about the ImClone scandal and Stewart, whose release from Alderson Women's Prison was approaching. Additionally, I was interested in gauging feelings about Stewart's highly publicized plan for a comeback; *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart* figured prominently in this plan. I did not collect demographic information from these interviewees aside from their names and cities of residence. Most of the interviews were one-on-one, though several included two interviewees. The data from these interviews are included in my discussion of the impact of the ImClone scandal on fans' attitudes about Stewart.

CHAPTER 3

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF *MARTHA STEWART LIVING*

Introduction

In this chapter I analyze the texts produced by Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO), with a particular focus on its flagship magazine (*Martha Stewart Living*), four television programs (*Martha Stewart Living*, *From Martha's Kitchen*, *From Martha's Garden*, and *From Martha's Home*), and website (marthastewart.com). Through textual and ideological analysis of the texts MSLO produces, I examine the ways in which Stewart and her staff use an authoritative voice and draw from discourses about gender, race, and class to compose messages about living well.

As the name of her media outlets indicates, Stewart serves as the model of her lifestyle suggestions; Stewart's role as model for good living complicates the messages about gender, race and class present in MSLO's media texts. As one of the most successful and influential American media organizations in its respective genres in the late 1990s and early 2000s, MSLO serves as a marker of the discourses Americans grappled with at the turn of the century. Below, I examine the ways in which *Living's* mode of address works to make Martha Stewart a figure audiences feel they know, should emulate; then I turn to the discourses of gender, race and class that structure *Living's* content.

Para-social Martha

At the center of each of Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia's media messages is Martha Stewart herself. As *Vanity Fair's* Matt Tyrnauer (2001) suggests, MSLO is "structured almost exclusively around the interests, activities, taste, experiences—and

occasionally whims—of one person. Martha Stewart, in other words, is the brand—probably the best example of a walking, talking ‘synergized’ being that has ever existed” (p. 398). *The Washington Post*’s Neil Irwin (2004) similarly reported that “Almost every product [MSLO] made was meant to capture her style and aura” (p. A04). *The New Republic*’s Margaret Talbot (1996) argues that the result of Stewart’s influence on MSLO’s products is “a cult, devoted to her name and image” (p. 30).

In this section I examine the ways in which Stewart’s media texts offer her audience a personal relationship with Stewart. Horton and Wohl (1956/1982) named this sort of relationship “para-social” and defined it as a “seeming face-to-face relationship between spectator and performer” (p. 188). From Horton and Wohl’s perspective, a para-social relationship is constructed in part through the role of a media persona (their focus was television) who encourages audiences to feel familiarity and intimacy through “direct observation and interpretation of his appearance, his gestures and voice, [and] his conversation and conduct in a variety of situations” (p. 190).

Rubin et al. (1985) argue that parasocial involvement can take many forms, including “seeking guidance from a media persona, seeing media personalities as friends, imagining being part of a favorite program’s social world, and desiring to meet media performers” (pp. 156-157). Though a great deal of research has focused on the viewer’s construction of and participation in the parasocial relationship, Horton and Wohl’s (1956/1982) original conceptualization of the para-social relationship accounted for the ways in which media texts, and the personae in them, take “the greatest pains ... to create an illusion of intimacy” (p. 191).¹ My focus in this section will be to examine the ways in which Stewart’s texts work to create intimacy between Stewart and her target audiences.

The placement of Stewart at the center of MSLO's media offerings actively constructs Martha Stewart as someone readers can come to know personally. The title attached to many of Stewart's media texts, *Martha Stewart Living*, of course, signals to audiences that the pages of the magazine (episodes of the TV show, suggestions in the newspaper column, products in the catalogs, etc.) contain examples of "living" based on Stewart's own life. To underscore Stewart's importance to the magazine, and brand the magazine with Stewart's image, Stewart appeared on the cover of each issue of *Living* for its first three years (ending with the June/July 1993 issue) and off and on thereafter. In 1996, Stewart explained her presence on *Living*'s cover to *Adweek*'s Mark Adams by referencing reader expectations: "Our readers like to know I am living the lifestyle I portray in the pages of this magazine" (para. 18).

Stewart's daily television program, also titled *Martha Stewart Living*, similarly suggests that the lifestyle suggestions it contains come directly from Stewart's life. Its spin-off programs, *From Martha's Kitchen* (on the Food Network 1999-2004), *From Martha's Garden*, and *From Martha's Home* (both on HGTV 2001-2004) use Stewart's name in their titles, suggesting that the contents of the show come directly from Martha Stewart's life and homes.

In *Living*'s premiere issue (Winter 1990), the content readers first encounter is a column entitled "A Letter from Martha." Eschewing the customary "Letter from the Editor," this column uses Stewart's first name, immediately putting the reader on a first-name basis with Martha Stewart. Stewart is referred to as "Martha" throughout each subsequent magazine in article copy and in other features, such as "Martha's Calendar" and "askMartha" (both discussed below). On Stewart's television programs, the male

voice that announces the introduction and commercial breaks to Stewart's programs similarly refers to Stewart as "Martha."

Stewart's merchandising endeavors—Martha by Mail, Martha's Flowers, and Martha's Cards, to name a few—need only reference Stewart by her first name to connote that they indeed come from Martha Stewart. As CNN.com (n.d.) noted, Stewart is "known to Americans on a first-name basis" ("Can a Good Thing Last," para. 3). Melissa Wood Aleman (2000), in her analysis of one year (March 1996-March 1997) of Stewart's magazine's "Letters to the Editor" feature found that *Living* readers "frequently refer to Martha Stewart as 'Martha,' very much in the same way that one would address a friend or family member" (p.14). The magazine's repeated use of Stewart's first name, as Aleman argues, "creates the façade that each reader is [Stewart's] very good friend" (p.14).

Like Stewart's first book, *Entertaining*, the first issue of *Living* (1990) contains images of Stewart's personal life, including photos of Stewart selecting a Christmas tree (p. 67), marbleizing a pumpkin for a holiday dinner (p. 85), arranging flowers (p. 88) and making a holly wreath (p. 95). Additionally, the magazine contains a story about how to make holiday wrapping paper that features photos of Stewart's daughter, Alexis (then in her mid-twenties) demonstrating her own techniques (pp. 74, 79).

Subsequent issues of *Living* continue this focus on Stewart's personal life, including numerous features on her homes: (the use of laboratory-type cabinets in Stewart's New York City apartment, Hamilton, W. B., 1995c; about a major revision of Turkey Hill, Stewart, 1999e; and the use of red in Stewart's Bedford, New York home, Wallis, 2001b); her family (Stewart's celebration with her sister Laura's family at Martha

Stewart's home in Maine, Boswell, 1998b; a feature on daughter Alexis Stewart's home in East Hampton, New York, Brink, 2002; and a tribute to Stewart's mother, Martha Kostyra, known to family and viewers alike as "Big Martha," Roach, 2004); her social engagements (a "summer lunch" with friends in Los Angeles, Iverson, 1992; and Stewart's high school reunion, held at her home in Maine, "Martha's Calendar," 2001b); and her pets (details about all of the cats she has ever owned, Stewart, April 1997c; and the death of her dog, Stewart, October 1998f).

Stewart's television programs similarly draw upon and reflect her personal life. In the early years of Stewart's television program, many of the stories were shot at Stewart's home, Turkey Hill, in Westport, Connecticut (Lippert, 1995, p. 31). However, in 1996, Stewart created a television studio in Westport that reproduced entire rooms of Stewart's homes in Westport, Connecticut, and East Hampton, New York, most notably the kitchens (Tyrnauer, 2001).² Stewart announced the move from Turkey Hill to the new studio to her magazine readers in July/August 1996 and said that the program has "outgrown my house on Turkey Hill Road" (1996d, p. 10). She emphasized that the gardening segments would still be taped in her personal gardens.

With Stewart's homes as the setting for her television programs, it follows that her personal life would also be a component of Stewart's television programs. Stewart's new "picnic boat" is featured in *From Martha's Home*; the entire episode revolves around the construction and launch of Skylands II (named after Stewart's home, Skylands in Mount Desert, Maine). Stewart takes the viewer behind the scenes of the Hinckley Company in Maine to learn how her boat was constructed. She interviews many of the workers at Hinckley who address her as "Martha." The final segment of the program

invites the viewer to attend the private “christening” of Stewart’s new boat, and to watch as Stewart and her friends take the boat on its first voyage (Krzyzanowski, 2002e).

Stewart also takes *From Martha’s Home* viewers to Galowitz Photographics in New York City to learn about the process of photo restoration. To illustrate the process, Stewart asked the shop to repair three of Stewart’s “most treasured” photos of her family: Stewart’s mother in her college cap and gown, Stewart’s mother as a child with her parents and brother, and Stewart’s grandmother as a young woman. We see more photos from Stewart’s private collection when the episode continues in Stewart’s studio, where she sorts her photo collection; she shows the viewer photos of her daughter Alexis Stewart as a child, herself on a motorcycle, and herself with Hillary Clinton (Krzyzanowski, 2002i).

Further, an HGTV special, *Christmas from Martha’s Home*, contained a segment on holiday centerpieces that included holiday reminiscing between Stewart and her mother, “Big Martha” (Krzyzanowski, 2002cc). On an episode of *Martha Stewart Living*, Stewart tells viewers that cleaning out her “bathroom cupboards” over the weekend inspired her to spend the day’s show time on organizing (Krzyzanowski, 2004g). Stewart shares the details of a recent birthday celebration in Maine with *From Martha’s Kitchen* viewers and offered that her party included 85 guests; she served the poached fruit recipe she demonstrates in the segment for dessert (Krzyzanowski, 2004a).

MSLO similarly uses its website, marthastewart.com, to construct a sense of familiarity to her viewers. In the September 1997 issue of *Living*, Stewart announced in “A Letter from Martha” the creation of www.marthastewart.com, which she suggests will allow “easy access on a daily basis to the vital information in every show—every recipe,

all the instructions, the sources, the visuals, and much more....” (1997e, p. 12). In December 1998, the site launched its first live chat with Stewart. Stewart told *Living* readers that the chat received eight thousand questions in one hour—a definite sign that Stewart’s audience was interested in communicating with her directly. Stewart reported that the questions ranged from “different aspects of holiday entertaining” to “questions of a personal nature.” She also offered her personal email address for readers to send questions or comments (1999a, p. 14).

In October 1999, Stewart announced in *Living* that marthastewart.com had been “redesigned to be faster, more comprehensive and more exciting” (1999g, p. 24). She highlighted one new feature, “meeting-place,” a section of Stewart’s website that guides users to bulletin boards, a virtual tour of Stewart’s TV studio, live discussions, and daily question and answer sessions.³ About it, Stewart told readers “This is your place” (1999g p. 24). While the question and answer sessions were the only of the three sections to offer users direct access to Stewart, another section of the website, accessible through an “About MSLO” link, offered direct and personal information about Stewart. In this section, Stewart answered a “question of the week” and users could access Stewart’s calendar (much like Stewart’s calendar in *Living* magazine, discussed below), view photos from Stewart’s “scrapbook,” and read the answers to questions Stewart is frequently asked about her personal life. The scrapbook section was particularly personal, including images of Stewart’s trip to the Westminster Dog Show with her dog Paw Paw, Stewart’s favorite Christmas card (designed by her niece), Stewart’s recent trip to Japan, Stewart’s gardens, and Stewart working in her office (Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, 1999). Other aspects of the website that allowed viewers to feel connected to

Stewart and her media offerings included a virtual studio (allowing users a behind-the-scenes tour) and a biography of Stewart (Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, 1999).

Many of MSLO's licensed products develop straight from aspects of Stewart's life. In 2006, RealEstateJournal.com listed the MSLO products based on Stewart's Turkey Hill home in Westport, Connecticut. They include: her book *Entertaining*, home styles sold through national home-builder KB Home, and a collection of furniture sold by Bernhardt Furniture (McMullen, para. 3). *Vanity Fair* similarly discussed MSLO products based on Skylands, Stewart's home in Maine: ten magazine features and TV segments, and a line of paints called the "Skylands Colors" (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 400). In addition to the broad use of Stewart's first name and personal life to create parasocial relationships with her audiences, four aspects of her media messages work specifically to encourage a felt closeness to Stewart: Remembering, Martha's Calendar, askMartha, and television production techniques.

Remembering

One of the most personal aspects of the 130-page first issue of *Living* is Stewart's full-page column "Remembering," which serves as the last piece of editorial content in the magazine. In her first "Remembering," Stewart writes about her childhood holiday memories and included photos of her family (1990, p. 126). She discusses how each member of her eight-person family made their own gifts because of "lack of funds." Stewart's tale of holiday memories emphasizes the traditions, creativity, and unity of the family despite their inability to purchase gifts for each other.

"Remembering" became a staple of the magazine, enduring until the May 2004 issue. Through the years, Stewart revealed many personal stories about her upbringing in

Nutley, New Jersey (sharing one bathroom with eight people, Stewart, 1993; learning to ski, Stewart, 1995b); her life with (later ex-) husband Andy and daughter Alexis Stewart (a Christmas holiday spent in the Berkshires, Stewart, 1991b; her honeymoon by car, Stewart, 2002c); and moments that defined her feelings about homekeeping (dreaming of having a collection of bed linens as a child, Stewart, 1997d; birthday cakes she has made, Stewart, 2002a). Each of the short essays contextualizes Stewart's frames of reference and her work ethic: growing up with meager resources, Stewart learned the techniques of homekeeping out of necessity and tradition—and to construct the trappings of the middle class life to which her family aspired.

“Remembering,” as Sarah Leavitt (2002) argues, also uses memories of the past to persuade readers to strive for the simplicity of this nostalgic past: “[Stewart] evokes an era or a historical moment when she felt at peace because of certain domestic ideals. Whether a remembered recipe, a family anecdote, or a household project, these incidents remind readers of their ultimate goal, to find domestic harmony through creativity and ingenuity” (p. 200). These memories of “domestic harmony” also boost Stewart's credibility as a domestic advisor by suggesting that the romantic vision of family she paints is part of her family heritage (Beecher, 2001, p. 121). Sharing intimate details of her upbringing, married life, and aspirations with her readers also fosters an illusion of closeness between Stewart and her readers.

Martha's Calendar

In the August and September 1992 issue of *Martha Stewart Living*, the magazine added a feature titled “Martha's Calendar.” The regular feature (enduring until it was renamed in September 2003) was placed before “A Letter from Martha,” making it the

first editorial content the reader encounters. As its heading describes, the feature consists of a monthly calendar that shares events from Stewart's busy schedule. For example, Stewart's calendar for August 1992 listed her birthday (August 4), when her vacation was scheduled to end (August 6) and when she would be "whale watching in Montauk" (August 23-24) (1992, p. 6).

Through the years the calendar included Stewart's TV appearances and public lectures as well as when she planned to take her pets to the veterinarian ("Martha's Calendar," 1994a, p. 6), her family members' birthdays ("Martha's Calendar," 1995a, p. 6), when her nieces and nephews would be at camp ("Martha's Calendar," 1996a, p. 8), and the dates on which she would undertake a wide variety of homekeeping tasks, like strawberry picking and dog grooming ("Martha's Calendar," 1998d, p. 10). In "A Letter from Martha" in the November 1994 issue of *Living*, Stewart emphasized to readers that publishing her monthly calendar is "meant to gently remind and inform" (p. 6); however, as Cynthia Duquette-Smith (2000) argues, "Martha's Calendar" simultaneously enhances the "perception of intimacy with Stewart" by allowing readers to learn the daily rhythms of Stewart's life (p. 350). I discuss another effect of the calendar below.

askMartha

In the February 1997 issue of *Living*, the "Letters to the Editor" section was replaced with "askMartha," the title drawn from a weekly newspaper column that Stewart began writing for the *New York Times* Syndicate in November 1995 ("Martha Stewart will write," 1995, p. 35). While the readers' letters in "Letters to the Editor" were printed without a salutation, each of the letters in "askMartha" begins with "Dear Martha," a

greeting that creates a feeling of intimacy with Stewart by implying that Stewart is available to her readers and will personally answer their letters.

In the summer of 1997, MSLO repurposed the “askMartha” format for her daily 90-second radio feature (Petrozello, 1997, p. 97). In January 1999, “askMartha” became a staple on Stewart’s daily television show, which had recently grown from a thirty-minute to a one-hour program. On television, the “askMartha” segment allows viewers to call in, speak to Stewart, and receive answers to their questions in real time.⁴ In the segments, callers with questions address Stewart as “Martha,” as if she is someone they know. That viewers can seek advice directly from Stewart, and viewers can watch regular folks like themselves in conversation with Stewart suggests that she is approachable and available to those interested in having contact with her.

Para-social Interaction in the Production Techniques of Martha Stewart Living

Looking more at television’s production techniques than its direct messages, Meyrowitz (1982) examines the ways in which texts structure intimacy through the concepts of proxemics and impression management. In “Television and Interpersonal Behavior,” Meyrowitz reworks Edward T. Hall’s concept of proxemics (the study of the spatial dimensions of human interaction) to create para-proxemics, through which he demonstrates the ways camera shots and angles work to manipulate the sense of closeness and distance to performers (pp. 225-231). Meyrowitz similarly uses Erving Goffman’s concept of impression management to speculate on how viewers make sense of settings and characters and why viewers might identify with media personae.

Using Meyrowitz’s work as a guide, I explore the meanings created through the way the camera positions Stewart in her television program’s setting. I carefully

examined the visual structure of a typical hour-long episode of *Martha Stewart Living*, which aired on October 8, 2002. The episode begins as the camera zooms in on Stewart and guest Ray Bliss Rich already at work at a table in the show's studio as they demonstrate the skills involved in making ink imprints of fish. The two work in a garden-themed room at an island in the center of the set; behind them are cabinets, a work space with a large farmhouse-style sink, and shelves on which terra cotta pots are neatly arranged. Stewart addresses viewers directly, smiles and jokes that the show, centered around a fish theme, is "packed to the gills." In this brief segment, Rich never looks at the camera or speaks to the audience; head down, he focuses on the fish he inks for a print he plans to make. Working beside Rich with a fish in one hand and a paintbrush in another, Stewart speaks directly to viewers to introduce the topics the episode will cover that day; as she mentions the various subjects the episode will contain, the camera cuts to pre-recorded footage of the episode's segments, visually previewing the show's contents. Once Stewart has introduced the topics for the day, she encourages viewers to stay tuned and the opening title sequence for the show begins (Krzyzanowski, 2002k).

The pre-recorded opening title sequence for Stewart's 2002-2003 television season includes a variety of shots in which the camera catches Stewart in the middle of a number of household situations and private moments from sun-up to sundown: awakening in bed, playing with her dogs and cats, gardening, tending to her chickens, ironing, painting, working on her computer, preparing a meal, eating with guests (one of whom is recognizable as her mother), and reading. In situations from private to mundane, Stewart often stops to smile for the camera, signaling that, although the camera has

caught her in private, personal moments, she welcomes the intrusion—indeed, she intends the intrusion to be instructive for the viewer.

Though this particular episode includes a range of different types of projects and ideas (from art to cooking to gardening), the camera staging and work for the program remain quite similar. In almost every segment Stewart stands behind a work space, usually a work table or kitchen island; though a mounted camera may capture what Stewart is doing from above the work space (for ease of teaching viewers), no camera shows Stewart's perspective to viewers. Instead, viewers watch Stewart from across her work space, which serves as a barrier preventing viewers from feeling spatially close to her and granting Stewart a degree of spatial authority. The distance creates a professional and purposeful relationship between Stewart and the viewer, and though Stewart remains focused on the show's tasks, her facial, gestural and vocal cues welcome the viewers and invite them into Stewart's world. As a result, Stewart is constructed as a kind host who is a professional and credible source for the information her show contains.

Stewart addresses viewers directly after each commercial break, and reminds them about what is next on the show. If the segment contains a guest, like author Linda Greenlaw who helped Stewart prepare Spicy Lobster Linguini in this episode, the guest is already in place on the set when the show returns from a commercial break. As the segment begins, Stewart introduces the guest to the viewers. Guests are shot just as Stewart is, usually with a medium shot; during conversations, a two-shot is regularly used to capture Stewart and her guest in conversation. Close-ups are infrequent and used generally for demonstrations of techniques, reaction shots during conversations, and Stewart's direct address to viewers before and after a commercial break.

Stewart makes polite conversation with the guest while discussing the techniques necessary to successfully complete the task. The segment with Greenlaw begins with the two seated at a table in front of the kitchen's island workspace as they discuss Greenlaw's book on her life as a lobsterwoman. Once they begin to prepare the linguini, they move behind the kitchen island and the table at which they had been sitting is no longer in view. As they work in the kitchen, viewers can see that the kitchen set is outfitted with restaurant-quality stainless steel appliances, a large farmhouse-style sink, light-colored stone countertops, light-colored cabinets with clear glass fronts that display Stewart's tableware collections inside, and numerous tools and ingredients neatly displayed in canisters. The stovetop that Stewart and Greenlaw use is on the island's surface, which allows them to face the audience through the meal's preparations, with the kitchen cabinets and many of the appliances at their backs.

Stewart's questions for Greenlaw placed Stewart in an almost surrogate role for the viewer, asking questions that viewers might want to know, while communicating steps in the project. When Stewart does not have an in-studio guest, as in her gardening segment on fish emulsion, she addresses the viewer directly throughout the segment, asking rhetorical questions about the beauty of her plants and encouraging viewers to think about how they might use the featured product in their own homes. Her voice and gestures are warm and casual, as if she were talking to a friend.

In sum, entrance into Stewart's private life both encourages familiarity and boosts her credibility by demonstrating that she truly lives the life she portrays in her various media outlets. This is emphasized by the show's sets, which as discussed earlier, are fashioned to look like rooms from Stewart's homes. While Stewart invites viewers to feel

close to her, she simultaneously maintains a distance that creates a formality that positions her as expert. The simultaneous act of enticing viewers to get close to Stewart while barring them from getting *too* close invites viewers into a close relationship with Stewart that positions her as superior.

Through the use of direct address, the sharing of personal details of Stewart's life, the use of *Living* features such as "Remembering," "Martha's Calendar," and "askMartha," and the use of space and the camera on Stewart's television programs, MSLO's media texts offer their audiences the opportunity to build a parasocial relationship with Martha Stewart. As Cynthia Duquette Smith (2000) argues, "MSLO texts create the illusion of a private conversation with Stewart herself" (p. 351). To make the development of a close relationship with Stewart possible, MSLO places her at the center of her media texts; the result, which I discuss next, is that Stewart becomes the model for *Living*'s lifestyle suggestions. Through the perceived visibility of Stewart's private life, audiences see evidence that Stewart regularly practices these suggestions, which allows her to speak with authority on a range of topics.

Teacherly Martha

In the June/July 1992 issue of *Martha Stewart Living*, Stewart writes that she was raised "in a family that considered research very important" (p. 4). She explains how, when planning the family garden, her father "thoroughly investigated" the qualities of each variety of tomato seed before making his selection of tomato seeds and how trips to the fabric store with her mother were like "seminars" on various aspects of sewing (1992a, p.4). She also stresses how valuable the hours she spent studying the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* were to her school assignments.

Stewart offers this information to readers as a way of explaining the purpose of her magazine, which she calls an “encyclopedia of the home” (1992a, p. 4). She suggests that, in each issue, she and her editorial staff “tackle each article with concentration, using clear and colorful photography and precise well-researched text to explain the subject” (1992a, p. 4). Stewart reiterated the reliability of the information in *Living* in the June 1998 issue:

We take great pains to make sure that our information is impeccably researched, that our recipes are clearly written and understandable, that our projects are carefully explained and their directions easy to follow. We try ever so hard to document our text with photographs and drawings of extreme clarity and precision (1998b, p. 14).

This framing of what *Martha Stewart Living* offers to readers (and viewers, purchasers, and users) is a fundamental component of MSLO offerings and repeatedly positions Stewart as an exemplary student-turned-teacher. Further, the format in which Stewart’s information is packaged positions her audiences as students.

Stewart develops the basis of her authority as a teacher by painting herself as an exemplary student. In September 1994, Stewart describes her schooling and suggests that “From my very first day of kindergarten, I knew I would love learning and being taught” (1994c, p. 112). In July 2001, Stewart details how she voluntarily attended summer school: “... I eagerly trekked up the hill and around the corner ... each day” (2001b, 196). Similarly, as a third grader learning cursive writing, Stewart practiced “hour after hour” to learn “the exacting and gently rounded portions of the *a*’s, *c*’s, and *o*’s, and the ups and downs of the taller letters like *l* and *t* (Stewart, 1998g, p. 288). In short, Stewart was “the perfect, obedient student” (Stewart, 1998g, p. 288).

In the February/March 1994 installment of “Remembering,” Stewart emphasizes to readers that her eagerness to learn carried into adulthood. For example, Stewart writes of receiving a “lesson” from her mother-in-law at the first auction she attended at Sotheby’s in New York City. Subsequently, she went to “every auction [she] could in New York City” and describes to readers how she learned to participate by “examining the individual pieces and comparing them to descriptions in the catalogs” (Stewart, 1994a, p. 136). In addition, she “watched to see how others looked at the pieces” and “eavesdropped on ... dealers” (Stewart, 1994a, p. 136). Stewart describes the earnestness with which she learned about auctions and demonstrates what she has learned by telling the reader her success stories—incredible finds at auctions.

In the October 1998 issue of *Living*, Stewart tells readers about the development of her interest in photography, learned first from her father and then her husband, her “second instructor” (1998f, p. 272). As a girl Stewart read fashion magazines and “studied the poses of the great models and the lighting of the greatest photographers....” (1998f, p. 272). She writes of how “I watched, I learned and I tried to apply my newfound knowledge” as she observed the numerous photographers with whom she worked on her cookbooks.

In the April 1998 issue Stewart describes how she has become “a sleuth, a detective, an interviewer, a historian” to trace the history of her newly purchased home in Maine (1998a, p. 16). Although “very little was written” about the house built by Edsel B. and Eleanor Clay Ford, Stewart “vowed that I would start a serious investigation into the how and why of this place” (1998a, p. 16). She discusses her methods with readers and urges them to avoid letting “history slip through your fingers” (1998a, p. 16).

Through Stewart's repeated descriptions of herself as an exemplary student, she underscores her interest in learning. She frequently refers to herself as "curious" and, in *Living's* May 2004 issue, she suggests that her drive for knowledge is part of what she calls MSLO's "'learning so we can teach' philosophy" which she stresses "has become synonymous with what we [at MSLO] do" (2004b, p. 160). Thus, Stewart positions herself as a student to suggest to her readers that the knowledge resulting from her desire to learn qualifies her to serve as an instructor.

An 1995 version of a Martha Stewart Living Enterprises' vision statement clearly indicates that Stewart conceives herself a teacher, to audience and staff alike:

MSL enterprises are founded on the proposition that Martha herself is both leader and teacher. While the ranks of "teaching disciples" within MSL may grow and extend, their authority rests upon their direct association with Martha.... By listening to Martha and following her lead, we can achieve real results in our own homes too – ourselves – just like she has.... (qtd. in Kasindorf, 1995, para. 19-21).

Stewart reiterates this idea in her letter to *Living* readers in July/August 1999:

What I am realizing is that I really am first and foremost a teacher, and in that capacity wish to share my knowledge, not only with our readers, viewers, and website visitors, but also with everyone who works here ... I keep thinking about how much I wish I could personally instruct and spend time with each and every one of [MSLO employees] (1999c, p. 14).

Stewart's self-characterization resonates with *Living* Editor-in-Chief Stephen Drucker, who, in his letter to readers in April 2000, describes Stewart as "an amazing women who was more interested in being a teacher than a boss" (p. 40).

While Drucker appreciates Stewart's mentorship, Stewart herself recognizes that not everyone welcomes her instruction. She told *New York's* Barbara Lippert in 1995 that her self-presentation as a teacher explains in part why some respond negatively to her:

"I'm less mother than teacher. ... Hardly anybody I know thinks of me as a mother.

Everybody loves their mothers, but not everybody likes their teachers. Teachers can be too hard on them” (p. 29). Margaret Talbot (1996) agrees that Stewart’s is not a motherly image: “Her habitual prickliness and Scotchguard perfectionism are more like the badges of the striving good girl, still cut to the quick by her classmates’ razzing when she asked for extra homework” (p. 32).

Indeed, Stewart’s approach to sharing her knowledge with audiences, based on self-constructed “unremitting competence and professional acumen” often positions Stewart as a know-it-all (Marling, 2001, p. 137). Though *Time* magazine named Stewart one of the twenty-five most influential Americans in 1996, they described her as “a demanding schoolmistress” (“Martha Stewart: empress,” 1996, para. 4). Stewart’s teacherly demeanor has also been described as earning her “a reputation for being too perfect, a control freak and an overachiever ...” (Perman, 1997, para. 31).

The educational backgrounds of Stewart’s audiences make this teacherly voice appropriate and relevant. As 2003 MLSO promotional materials boast, a majority of *Living*’s readers (68%), viewers (46%), and users (80%) have at least attended college (Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, n.d.). MSLO’s success thus rests in part on Stewart’s appeal to well-educated audiences and her success at speaking to them in a language with which they would be comfortable. Below I describe the recurrent terms of Stewart’s scholarly vocabulary: glossary, 101, field trip, checklist and workbook.

Glossaries

Stewart’s teacherly persona is illustrated through the appropriation of educational terms and tools to supplement the “lessons” taught in *Living*. The term glossary first appeared in Spring 1991 in *Living*’s second issue. This pictorial glossary accompanied an

“encyclopedia of greens,” a story on salads, and consisted of individual lettuce leaves ordered and photographed on a black background. Each different leaf was labeled and its qualities described (“Salads,” pp. 60-63).

Over time, the glossary became a staple of *Living* articles (whether overtly labeled as such or not). Editor-in-Chief Stephen Drucker discusses the term specifically in his letter to readers in February 1998. He describes the glossaries used in *Living* as “photographs that present all the possibilities for your home so beautifully” and suggests that the collections of glossaries readers will collect over time “will grow into an encyclopedia of homemaking, with all the answers you’re looking for” (p. 22). The issue in which Drucker described the technique contained glossaries for palms, flowerpots, avocados, household tapes, and silver implements used in the preparation of tea. Glossaries appearing in the magazine over time include: tulips (Whiteside, 1992), citrus (“Citrus,” 1992), mantels (Barbour, 1996a), glues (Brink, 2000) and sandpaper (Williams, 2000). Though glossaries are used mostly in *Living* magazine, I did observe one glossary in the television programs I analyzed: a glossary of oranges on the January 18, 2003 episode of *From Martha’s Kitchen* (Krzyzanowski, 2003a).

101s

The magazine’s first use of “101” appeared in November 1995, several years after the first glossary. Stewart told readers in April 1996 that the article, “Turkey 101,” had been so well received that 101s would become one of the magazine’s regular features beginning with the issue’s article “Ham 101” (p. 10). Stewart described the concept as developing in an editorial meeting when the staff discussed the idea of teaching a single recipe “like the introductory courses we all took in college” (p. 10). She reports that the

turkey feature resulted in many readers “roast[ing] perfect, mahogany-glazed birds” and that success encouraged the development of a regular feature (p. 10).

To emphasize the thoroughness of the approach, Stewart explains that for “Ham 101” *Living*’s food editors “not only perfected the recipes but spent a good deal of time searching out the best sources for ham and equipment” (p. 10). Because “perfection in a recipe for baked ham is somewhat elusive” the creators of *Living* “tested and retested, tasted and judged” (p. 10). The 101 approach appeared in nearly every issue of *Living* through August 2004 and grew to include much more than recipes: Knitting 101 (Welby, 1997), Weather 101 (Peake, 1998a), Fertilizer 101 (Galitzki, 1999), Embroidery 101 (Lyttle, 2001) and Birding 101 (Koeppel, 2002).

The 101 feature is also prominent in Stewart’s television programs. For instance, *From Martha’s Kitchen* included a segment titled “Macaroni & Cheese 101” (Krzyzanowski, 2002j), and *From Martha’s Garden* included a segment on “Perennials 101” (Krzyzanowski, 2002m). Further, an episode of *Martha Stewart Living* contained a segment on “Rose Bouquets 101” (Krzyzanowski, 2004f).

Some entire episodes focus on a particular 101 subject. For example, the entire November 10, 2002 episode of *From Martha’s Home* was dedicated to “Packing 101,” and featured segments on projects involving making luggage tags, laminating a phone list, and making a blanket and pillow car set (Krzyzanowski, 2002w). The popular 101 articles and segments appeal, as Cynthia Duquette Smith (2000) argues, to “an audience accustomed to problem solving through education” (p. 349).

Field Trips

A “multimillion-dollar marketing agreement” deal with Chrysler laid the foundation for the field trip feature in Stewart’s magazine, on her television and radio programs, and on her website; Chrysler became the exclusive sponsor of features based on travel beginning in April 2002 (“Chrysler Signs Deal,” 2002, p. C7). On Stewart’s television program, a weekly feature named “Field Trips,” obviously references the educational excursions useful for enabling firsthand observation—and a welcome break from classroom instruction. Field trips on *Martha Stewart Living* have included trips to Hortus Bulborum in the Netherlands to see heirloom flower bulbs in bloom (Krzyzanowski 2002a), to Texas to see the work of faux bois artist Carlos Cortez (Krzyzanowski 2002t), and to Travellers Leather in Maine to see the process involved in creating a leather fireplace bucket (Krzyzanowski 2002aa). Though the majority of field trip segments do not feature Stewart on camera, she serves as narrator, directing viewers’ attention, and emphasizing the “lessons” to be learned from each trip.

In *Martha Stewart Living* magazine, the feature was named “Road Trips” (geared more directly to car trips and thus the Chrysler automobiles advertised on the adjacent pages). Stewart introduced the feature to readers in April 2002 as “offering some very interesting and creative ways to travel by car ... and great suggestions for specific destinations and itineraries” (p. 14). Crafted more as a column to offer jaunts to take by car, many of the suggested trips did have an educational foundation, such as visiting museums of arts and crafts (Ermann, 2003), America’s greatest trees (Schultz, 2002), and historical hotels (Matthews, 2003). Chrysler opted not to renew its contract with MSLO in March 2003 when media reports linked Stewart to the ImClone scandal, and the

feature disappeared from *Living* altogether with the July 2003 issue (“DaimlerChrysler,” 2003). However, the television program retained the field trip segments, allowing viewers to continue to learn from Stewart through instructive excursions.

Step-by-step Directions, Checklists and Workbooks

A significant part of Stewart’s “lessons” is told through lists and steps. As Cynthia Duquette Smith (2000) observes, “The details provided for accomplishing [daily tasks] indicate the complexity of the jobs on an *intellectual* level, and the importance of receiving an ‘education’ to effectively carry them out” (p. 353). Thus, MSLO communicates tasks in such a way as to suggest that audience members will be unable to complete the task without Stewart’s guidance.

Stewart emphasizes to readers in *Living*’s July/August 1995 issue that one of the magazine’s goals is to enable readers to try new things. To this end, the MSLO staff provides readers the detailed information they need to successfully accomplish each new project introduced. The authoritarian teaching style Stewart uses to persuade readers to try new things conveys that Stewart values imitation over exploration and self-discovery. In other words, Stewart wants her readers to try new things, but only according to her instructions. Thus, Stewart suggests that “For most of us, trying a new recipe is a lot less intimidating than building an outdoor shower or garden shed [both are projects included in the issue in which Stewart writes]. And yet, if you approach these projects in an orderly fashion, the results can be very gratifying” (1995g, p. 6). MSLO provides the means to accomplish these new tasks with lists and step-by-step guides.

These techniques are not exclusively Stewart’s creation; as Mary Anne Beecher (2001) suggests, they are foundational components of the how-to genre. Beecher argues

that “the philosophy of craft is historically based on this type of rule-oriented instruction that results in knowledge that is acquired through learned action” (p. 122). Beecher emphasizes that “it is not until these steps are mastered that creative divergence is encouraged” (p. 122). Adhering to and upholding this tradition, Stewart teaches her audiences utilizing this step-by-step language to ensure that followers learn the craft precisely and achieve the desired outcome: perfect repetition of Stewart’s example.

The importance of precise details and steps is obvious in Stewart’s earliest books on entertaining and cooking, as the success of many recipes is dependent on precise measurement and inclusion of each ingredient in a particular order. However, beginning with the Winter 1990 premiere issue of *Living*, Stewart provides readers with step-by-step instructions on a wealth of topics: restoring an antique chandelier, forcing spring bulbs, baking cookies, organizing a kitchen, cooking a holiday dinner, making cleaning products from scratch, making a variety of wreaths and making and decorating gift wrap. Over time *Living* has included detailed directions for successfully accomplishing a broad range of tasks. However, Stewart’s instructions for unusual tasks, such as gilding a mirror (Jack, 1992), plumbing repairs (Hamilton, W. B., 1996a), and decorating with birdcages (Prisant, 2002) seem to be more unfamiliar than instructions provided for more mundane tasks such as stocking a pantry (Spring, 1993), ironing a tablecloth (Wallis, 2000), and choosing and using the correct sponge (Huber, 2004). That details for completing familiar and ordinary tasks are including in *Living* suggests that Stewart’s approach to all areas of homekeeping is exemplary and, thus, even her guidance on seemingly insignificant matters will benefit readers.

Stewart's television program offers viewers the chance to learn from observation of Stewart's techniques (particularly with the use of the camera placed directly above Stewart's workspace) as well as from tips on performing the steps involved in a project. What the format does not allow, however, is a way for viewers to have a record or list of what they saw on the program. To provide a solution for this lack, the "Television Program Guide" was added to *Martha Stewart Living* magazine in the February/March 1994 issue. The first program guide includes information from eight of the (then) weekly episodes and detailed instructions for recipes and projects demonstrated on the shows. The guide also contains contact information for experts and/or businesses featured on the show. In addition to enabling Stewart's viewers to enjoy the program without having to take notes furiously to keep up with the information, the program guide refers television viewers to *Living* magazine, and thus helped stimulate sales of Stewart's magazine.

Once *Martha Stewart Living* became a daily show, and marthastewart.com was up and running, much of the information that had previously been included in the magazine's program guide was made available on Stewart's website. Including this information on marthastewart.com created content for the website, encouraged viewers to use the site, and stimulated advertiser revenue. In June 1998, much of the content of the magazine's "Program Guide" was recipes; by October 2002, the "Television Guide," referencing Stewart's four programs, contained selected recipes from *Martha Stewart Living* and *From Martha's Kitchen*, and project information generated in *From Martha's Garden* and *From Martha's Home*.

On top of providing audiences with a list of steps to follow, Stewart assigns homework. While the format of *Living*'s suggestions and advice often take the form of

lists, the most direct form of this style, the checklist, originated in the July/August 1998 issue with a homekeeping story entitled “A Vacation Checklist.” Though it did not include an actual list as its title implies, the checklist contained a number of tasks, ordered sequentially, to help prepare the reader’s home for an absence during a trip. The article implied that carefully following the provided suggestions and creating a “departure checklist” would result in “a worry-free vacation” (Peake, 1998c, p. 108).

From this article came a number of features that included actual lists with spaces provided (circles or boxes) for the reader to check off each newly completed task. The “Holiday planner” in the November 1998 issue was a one-page list of preparatory tasks beginning five weeks before the Christmas and Hanukkah holidays (“Countdown,” p. 76). A feature on turning a china cabinet into a bar in *Living*’s November 2001 issue included a checklist of items to be incorporated into a well-stocked bar, dividing the items into categories such as tools, liquors and beverages, and glassware (Wallis, 2001a, p. 162).

Additional checklists include a spring cleaning checklist (“Spring cleaning,” 2002), a travel toiletries checklist (Pokorny, 2002), and a Thanksgiving Day planner (“Thanksgiving Day,” 2002). Once an established component of Stewart’s communication to her audiences, the checklist even became a part of Kmart’s advertising campaign for Stewart’s “Everyday” products. An eight-page spread that ran in *Living* from July 2001 through February 2003 contained a checklist on its final page, enabling readers to remember to purchase the featured items.

A more involved homework assignment is the workbook, which premiered in *Living* in the October 2000 issue. An eight-page companion to a story on hosting a

“Haunted House Party” includes templates for tombstones and silhouette curtains, instructions for making a severed finger invitation, and recipes for meringue bones and Halloween lollipops (“Halloween,” pp. 272-286). After this, the workbook appeared regularly in the October (Halloween) and December (holiday) issues before becoming a regular column in the April 2003 issue. In each case, the workbook contents contains templates and detailed instructions for projects featured in the magazine. For example, the May 2003 workbook gave readers instructions to make a button clock displayed in the pages of the feature “Button Crafts” (“Workbook,” p. 182); the September 2003 workbook gave readers instructions for displaying mirrors and plates on the wall as demonstrated in the feature “Living with Collections” (“Workbook,” p. 202); and the January 2004 workbook gave readers the tools to make a bed canopy as featured in “Bed Time” (“Workbook,” p. 134).

In *Living* magazine, both the checklist and the workbook provide the instruction necessary to complete the projects to Stewart’s specifications. However, through their inclusion of precise details, Stewart’s checklists and workbooks, more formally than any other of the features in the magazine, suggest that readers take action after reading the magazine. The ordered steps and the boxes to be checked on each checklist work to discourage readers from deviating from Stewart’s strict instructions.

Martha’s Calendar

Though “Martha’s Calendar,” discussed above, does not necessarily derive from educational terminology, it works in a similar way to teach Stewart’s readers (and website users) to learn through Stewart’s example. The calendar, meant, as aforementioned, as a window into Stewart’s private life, also serves, as Cynthia Duquette

Smith (2000) argues, as “a disciplining agent” (p. 350). In addition to listing Stewart’s personal engagements, the calendar lists homekeeping tasks that Stewart plans to complete. Stewart’s first two calendars in the August and September 1992 issue were relatively sparse and included non-specific tasks that stretched over a number of days, such as “Make relishes and pickles;” others were more specific, such as “Wash north side of house with bleach solution for mildew” (p. 6).

Over time, Stewart’s calendar became fuller and more detailed. By November 1994, Stewart’s calendar was packed with discrete and descriptive entries such as ““Order cord wood; have chimneys cleaned;” “Have cars serviced and winterized; put snow tires on;” and “Give old pumpkins to the chickens” (p. 4). Stewart acknowledged that readers noticed the changes in “A Letter from Martha” in the November 1994 issue. In response to a written complaint about the calendar, which in part urged Stewart to “Leave your fantasy world and live in today’s world,” Stewart replied that “I know that the calendar is full, but it is full so that it can coax all of us into balancing our lives so that there will be time to plant daffodils, cook a special meal, or collect old-fashioned Christmas-tree ornaments” (p. 6). Though this critique of Stewart’s calendar clearly suggests that the number and nature of the tasks on “Martha’s Calendar” are out of line with this reader’s reality, Stewart insists that readers can improve their lives by following Stewart’s recommendations.

In September 2003, “Martha’s Calendar” was renamed “Gentle Reminders.” The change was explained in “A Letter from Martha” as a way “to serve ... the reader better” and suggested that the staff thought readers would “appreciate a list of homekeeping hints that prods you into doing seasonal chores and organizing jobs that are essential for

keeping your home well run” (2003b, p. 8). Though the real reason for removing Stewart’s personal information from the section likely had more to do with Stewart’s ImClone stock sale than better serving the readers, what remained from the calendar was a list of important dates and seasonal tasks that readers should be minding. For those readers interested in additional guidance, “Gentle Reminders” prompts readers to visit marthastewart.com for “links to more useful advice” (2003, p. 4). The advice readers could find on the website, much like the magazine, no longer included information from Stewart’s personal calendar.

What to Have for Dinner

Similar in function to “Martha’s Calendar” is “What to Have for Dinner.” The column first appeared in *Living*’s second issue (Spring 1991) and regularly includes at least four recipes for dinner; for example, the Spring 1991 issue contained recipes for Carrot and Yellow Pepper Soup with Rosemary (an appetizer course), Roast Peppered Rack of Lamb (the main dish), Pea Pods and Radishes and Zucchini Potato Pancakes (two vegetable accompaniments), and Vanilla Ice Cream with Hot Rhubarb Blackberry Compote (dessert) (p. 120). Accompanying the column is a perforated tear-out section that makes four cards (one for each of the recipes) suitable for storing in a recipe box.

Though the subtitle to the column boasts “A meal in less than an hour,” the number of ingredients, and the steps included for each of the meal’s components, are much too involved for a non-professional cook to complete in one hour. Despite the difficulty of Stewart’s suggestions, the authoritative command of the column’s title, “What to Have for Dinner,” and the tear-out recipe cards, instruct the readers these meals should be on their dinner tables. Perhaps recognizing the command present in the its title,

the column was renamed “What’s for Dinner?” in October 2002. With this change, the recipes included in the section became a welcome answer to an all-too-familiar question, not a command.

Arcane Historical Details

In addition to using specific teacherly terms and approaches in her media messages, Stewart bolsters her teacherly persona by contextualizing her projects and suggestions through what Cynthia Duquette Smith (2000) calls “arcane historical details” (p. 348). Present in Stewart’s first book *Entertaining* and in Stewart’s magazine and television programs, historical context works both as an educational introduction to the topic at hand and as a display of Stewart’s seemingly endless knowledge on a wide variety of topics. For example, in *Living*’s first issue (Winter 1990), a story about wreaths began:

From our country’s very beginnings, German and English settlers decked the halls with garlands of greenery, bringing their traditions of holly and ivy and evergreen boughs to the celebrations in their new homes. But the wreath is thoroughly American, speaking with its symbolism of the year’s cycle, of eternal life (“Wreaths,” p. 91).

An October 1994 feature on chickens (which also contained a glossary) included the following information:

Time was, chickens had their proper place in the world. The ancient Romans thought them sacred and employed roosters in fortune-telling. In the mid-nineteenth century, when new breeds were brought from China, Americans were seized, briefly with “hen fever,” and chickens suddenly became fashionable. According to Page Smith and Charles Daniel, who co-wrote the book on chickens, *The Chicken Book*, the birds were exhibited, admired, painted, written and sung about. The most fashionable breeds were traded and bought like blue-chip stocks. In an 1849 treatise, the Reverend Edmund Saul Dixon praised the fowl not only for its eggs, meat, and medicinal qualities, but its thrift and industry, its “courageous temper and affectionate disposition” (Kessler, pp. 75-76).

Additionally, a June 2002 story on green peas offered that they were “domesticated during the late Stone Age” (Christopher, p. 172), and a November 1997 article entitled “Demystifying the Dishwasher” asserted that the household appliance’s history dates to a patent in “1850 by J. Houghton of Ogden, New York” (Hay, p. 116). Similarly, a May 1999 story on potholders, noted that they “first began to be used between 1880 and 1920” (Trucco, p. 178).

The importance of these “arcane historical details” to Stewart’s messages was underscored when the regular one-page column “Do You Know?” was added to *Living* in June 1998. The question in the column’s title suggests that Stewart uses the column to challenge readers to a game of trivia in which she will likely be the victor; indeed, the unfamiliar information included in the regular feature nearly guarantees that Stewart will know more than her readers. The column’s subtitle, “facts and figures about this month” promises that each month the column will contain information relevant to the time of year.

“Do You Know?” is an unusual component of *Living* as it does not offer information for completing tasks; it contains information useful only to “school” readers in a range of subjects. Though many of the column’s entries may have practical applications, the lack of detail included for each entry, and the obscurity of the information each entry contains, suggests that they are included more for intellectual stimulation than replication. For example, June 1998’s “Do You Know?” included the following:

Folklore suggests that if you hear a cuckoo’s call on the morning of the twenty-first—The Summer Solstice—the summer will be rainy.

The juneberry is a native American fruit that will set your jellies and cobblers apart from the crowd. Similar in appearance to a blueberry, it has a distinctive taste and can be easily cultivated throughout the country (p. 44).

Living's March 2000 "Do You Know?" contains information typical of the column:

Gardeners dread the lamb blast, the seasonal opposite of Indian summer, in which a sudden winter storm in spring endangers new lambs and plants.

For the Romans, March was the first month of the year, which is why the names of later months—October (the eighth month), November (the ninth month)—are out of sync with our modern calendar (p. 58).

The column does not instruct readers as to where to find a cuckoo or juneberries, nor does it provide readers with useful tips for protecting animals and plants from the lamb blast; instead, the information is presented just as the column's title suggests: to simply share the information. In the process, it demonstrates Stewart's superior knowledge.

The change to the column's subtitle in the September 2001 issue to "Interesting facts and figures" suggests that "arcane historical details" particular to each month might be becoming increasingly difficult to find. Similarly, the column's subtitle change indicates that the feature's collection of little known facts and figures *should* appeal to the magazine's readers. Though the column dropped its monthly focus, it continued to include obscure information, such as the following entries from September 2001:

To predict the weather, stand with your back to the wind and watch the high clouds. If they travel from right to left, you can generally expect improvement; from left to right, the weather will likely worsen.

Bricks often served as ballast on ships traveling to the American colonies. Once here, they were unloaded and used for building (p. 50).

Stewart's television programs, like her books and magazines, also contain historical information used to contextualize the focus of television segments. In a *From*

Martha's Garden episode aired October 8, 2002, a segment on an Irish roof thatcher begins:

Once there was a fine mansion with a big garden and an iron gate, a little girl named Peggy lived there and when she was ten, her mother gave her a splendid play house with a real thatched roof. She was very lucky. Years went by, the roof needed repair and one day a man came to fix it. And as he climbed up on the roof to thatch he would say odd things like [something Gaelic], which means, "never thatch a house on a windy day." The man on the roof, William Cahill, is Irish and one of the last to practice the ancient trade of roof thatching in this country. He was brought to Old Westbury Gardens, the former Phipps estate on Long Island, New York. His mission: to fix the playhouse roof first thatched in 1916. Thatching is a tradition that stretches back to the Bronze Age in Ireland, some 2,000 years (Krzyzanowski, 2002h).

Similarly, on *Martha Stewart Living's* November 13, 2002 episode, with guest Marc Marrone, Stewart tells the story of Quaker parrots, originally from Argentina, that now live in Westport, Connecticut (where Stewart learned of them), Long Island and the Bronx, Chicago and Florida. Viewers learn that there are many stories about the birds' arrival in the United States, but that no one knows for sure how they got here from Argentina. Marc Marrone tells viewers that the Quaker parrot is the only parrot species to build "external nests." He describes the nest-building process as communal: "They all get together and they get sticks and they weave these sticks into these giant ... six foot long wide nests with a bazillion apartments in it" (Krzyzanowski, 2002z).

In a segment on *Martha Stewart Living* about Parker House Rolls, Stewart offers background on the unusually shaped roll's development: "Legend has it that in the late 1800s, the head baker of the Parker House Hotel in Boston created this kind of roll in a fit of anger. He threw rolls onto a pan clenching each one in his fist like that [Stewart demonstrates] creating the famous crease" (Krzyzanowski, 2003d). The inclusion of arcane historical details in Stewart's magazine articles and television programs proves to

be more informational than instructive for audiences. The presence of this obscure information, however, works to reinforce Stewart's self-proclaimed thirst for knowledge, bolster her credibility on a range of topics, and reinforce her intellectual superiority.

Guest Experts

In numerous ways Stewart positions herself as the ultimate expert on a range of topics; however, she frequently invites other experts to her magazine and television programs to offer her audience access to information Stewart may not readily possess. Though the information offered comes not from Stewart, but her expert guests, it follows that Stewart's audience would not have the opportunity to learn from these experts without Stewart's connections and her recognition that the experts' knowledge could be of use to her audience. That Stewart has ties to experts in a range of fields bolsters her credibility as well.

Living featured gourmet-food shop owner Ina Garten in the February/March 1993 issue for a feature on "Sunday Lunch." Garten, who has been "cook[ing] for New York City's most finicky palates" for fifteen years, shares her recipes, methods of preparation, and philosophy on entertaining through the "earthy Tuscan menu" she selected for the occasion (p. 66). Numerous photos capture the food prepared by Garten and the fun her guests seem to be having. An apron-clad Stewart is pictured in the story and a caption below her picture suggests that Stewart helped by serving the meal Garten prepared.

"Patron Saint of Damaged Clothes" Alice Zotta is an expert featured in *Living's* October 1995 issue. The three-page article about Zotta, "The Art of Reweaving," details Zotta's techniques and pictures the process of repairing a hole in a pair of woven shorts, a silk-satin chemise, a pair of wool gabardine trousers, a flowered dress and a sweater

(Barbour, 1995, p. 46-50). A number of experts appear in *Living's* February 1999 article "Communicating with a Pet." For example, neuropsychologist Stanley Coren and veterinarian Michael W. Fox discuss the biological possibilities for communicating with a pet; and authors Alan Beck and Aaron Katcher list the benefits humans receive from interactions with animals (Hall, T., 1999, pp. 72-76).

Experts also are abundant on Stewart's television program. On an October 9, 2002 episode of *From Martha's Home*, Stewart visits with (as the show's announcer describes him) "one of the country's premiere experts on American furniture, Albert Sack." Stewart refers to Sack's book on antiques and calls him a "scholar." Underscoring Sack's importance to her own knowledge of antique furniture (and to her viewers through association), Stewart emphasizes that Sack's book, *The New Fine Points of Furniture*, is "invaluable" (Krzyzanowski, 2002l).

On an episode of *Martha Stewart Living* that aired on September 26, 2002, Stewart introduces chef Judy Rodgers from the Zuni Café as a chef "I've admired, whose restaurant I love and visit every single time I go to San Francisco." Stewart stresses that Rodgers has just completed a "useful, practical and inspired" book, *The Zuni Café Cookbook*. Rodgers and Stewart work together to produce one of Stewart's favorite meals from the restaurant—a hamburger—from scratch, beginning with grinding the meat (Krzyzanowski, 2002a).

Stewart takes viewers to Florida for a segment on palm trees in the November 13, 2002 episode of *From Martha's Garden*. At the Fairchild Tropical Garden, Stewart discusses the over seven hundred species of palm trees the garden contains with Garden Director Dr. Julia Kornegay and Director of Plant Collections, Chuck Hubbuch. In

addition to learning the history of the garden and viewing the largest seed in the plant kingdom, viewers have the opportunity to learn about many species of palms and hear about their care from top experts (Krzyzanowski, 2002x).

In many television segments with experts, Stewart cedes some of her authority and takes directions and asks questions that would help the viewers follow the information in the discussion. When working in the kitchen, Stewart frequently serves as the guest's sous chef and follows the steps she or he outlines. Though Stewart presents herself as all-knowing about many topics, like any responsible teacher, she supplements her knowledge with experts on specific topics. To demonstrate that the curiosity from her school days remains an important component of her personality, she shares power when appropriate.

The emphasis Stewart tells readers she places on learning and research positions her as an exemplary student-turned-instructor and enables her to use educational language; it also provides a model that encourages audiences to respect Stewart's knowledge. Just as Stewart earnestly practiced to develop her cursive writing, her audience is expected to mimic Stewart's example. The use of glossaries, 101s, field trips, lists, and workbooks construct an imbalance of power between Stewart and her audience members, positioning Stewart, by nature of her seemingly vast knowledge, as dominant, and her audiences, through their desire to learn, as subservient. Stewart models this relationship through her own subservience to experts, teaching audiences how they should relate to her.

Though the preferred reading of Stewart's lessons does not encourage deviation from her example, in the conclusion to Stewart's story about learning cursive in third

grade, she reveals that “all hell broke loose” in fourth grade when the students “rebelled so vigorously by writing in styles so individualistic and so personal that our teachers really did have a difficult time deciphering our homework” (Stewart, 1998g, p. 288). Though the deep structures of Stewart’s text invite submission, Stewart’s audiences, much like her fourth grade class, decode *Martha Stewart Living*’s messages according to their individual cultural backgrounds. The fact that audience members will utilize the information MSLO provides on their own terms provides for the possibility that Stewart’s message cannot dictate conformity or, in other words, encoding cannot determine decoding. I examine the audience’s reactions to Stewart’s messages in the next chapter. In the remainder of this chapter, I continue my analysis of the latent messages in *Martha Stewart Living* by examining the messages about gender, race and class in Stewart’s lifestyle suggestions.

Gender, Work, and Domesticity

The editorial sections of the Winter 1990 preview issue of *Martha Stewart Living* subtly suggest that the publication’s primary audience is women. Stewart’s “A Letter From Martha” never addresses or describes the intended reader directly; she instead suggests that she shares with readers the feeling that “Our families and our homes are the centers of our lives” and that “at the end of the day, no matter who we are or what we do, we want to go home” (p. 4). She thus defines her readers as home-centered by highlighting the ideas they share without directly tying those interests to gender identifications.

There are many cues throughout the premier issue that suggest Stewart believes that the home- and family-centered readers she addresses are women: articles entitled

“Cookies for the Children,” and “The Family Kitchen,” and advertisements for panty hose, kitchen appliances, food, and cleaning products reference the stereotypical accoutrements of women’s domain: beauty and home. The relatively few images of people that accompany the issue’s articles include women and children; men are rarely pictured, and when they are, they are presented as craftsmen demonstrating the specialized skills necessary to properly complete a suggested project.

Living’s focus on heterosexual couples, families, and children dominates the magazine’s first two years, with stories that include, “Sailing Away,” a look at family-friendly sailing trips (Wolff, 1991); “All Hallows’ Eve,” suggestions for Halloween activities and children’s costumes (“All Hallows,” 1991); “Winter Wedding,” a detailed look at the preparations for a celebration of one heterosexual couple’s union (“Winter Wedding,” 1991); and “Romantic Dinner for Valentine’s Day,” an article that featured an image of a heterosexual couple holding hands across a candlelit table (Raisfeld, 1992).

Given that the focus of *Martha Stewart Living* is in large part centered on the lifestyle and interests of Martha Stewart, the magazine’s initial focus on family and children is unusual. By the time the Winter 1990 issue premiered, Stewart was divorced from her husband, and her only daughter Alexis was grown. The fact that the magazine regularly featured articles for those in heterosexual relationships and with young children, particularly when Stewart’s life did not, suggests that Stewart believed that including this particular kind of family life would be a way to draw in her target readers.

Over time, MSLO editorial interests in weddings and children spun off into additional magazine titles: *Martha Stewart Living Weddings* premiered in December 1994, *Martha Stewart Baby* premiered in March 2000, and *Martha Stewart Kids*

premiered in August of 2001. What remained in *Martha Stewart Living* was a focus on the home, including topics such as food preparation, decorating, crafting, gardening, and cleaning; perhaps as a result of the decision to move the editorial content about relationships and children to the new, more specialized magazines, the remaining content in *Martha Stewart Living* magazine focused more on objects and completed projects than people.

The lack of people in *Living*'s images caught the attention of Cynthia Duquette Smith (2000), who suggests that the magazine's "copious photographs ... which focus more on things than on people" deemphasize the value of human relationships and position readers as consumers of material goods (p. 359). The *New Republic*'s Margaret Talbot (1996) writes that the images in *Living* suggested that Stewart was not "remotely interested in the messy contingencies of family life" (p. 32). Further, Talbot suggests that when children do appear in *Living*, Stewart uses them "as accessories, much like Parisian women deploy little dogs" (1996, p. 32), not as rich symbols of family life. Elaborating, she continues: "The books and especially the magazine are often graced with photographic spreads of parties and teas where children pale as waxen angels somberly disport themselves, their fair hair shaped into tasteful blunt cuts, their slight figures clad in storybook velvet or lace" (Talbot, 1996, pp. 32-33). While *Living*'s turn from family to finished projects and perfect occasions may have de-emphasized the humanity in Stewart's projects and lifestyle suggestions, the focus on things and completed tasks in *Living*'s texts and images (as discussed by my focus group participants in the following chapter), opens *Martha Stewart Living* to readers interested in homekeeping who may not embrace the traditional views of home present in *Living*'s early issues.

The shift in focus, undoubtedly due to the spinoffs of the specialty magazines, is also due to the publication's success, which gave Stewart an increased ability to exert her influence and allow her to sidestep the traditional representations of home and family found in other women's magazines. Though Stewart does discuss conventional family life in "Remembering," a column in which she shares stories about her childhood and memories from early adulthood, readers learn that Stewart's "nuclear family" consists of her mother, daughter, and siblings' children, and that her "extended family" is populated with her co-workers, her pets, and those with whom she socializes. Articles and images relay the details of Stewart's non-familial relationships at least as often as of Stewart's biological family. Stewart's own life, then, serves to construct a non-traditional family in *Living*, and works to lessen the magazine's focus on the intimate intricacies of traditional family life.

The shift away from traditional representations of family concerns may also be explained in part by the editorial staff. In the first two years of the magazine's publication, few men appeared on the masthead as part of the editorial staff. Most male names listed fell under the heading "Production Staff," positions that would have almost no impact on the magazine's editorial content. Until the February/March 1993 issue, the majority of editors and contributors were female. When more men joined *Living's* editorial staff, the magazine's focus on family began to lessen; three men in particular, who would have long careers at MSLO, joined *Living* in 1993: Eric A. Pike (who would become Holiday Editorial Director), Fritz Karch (who would become Collecting Editorial Director), and Stephen Earle (who would become Home Editorial Director).

Despite the (relatively slow) change in editorial focus, Stewart's male readers sensed that the magazine's intended reader was female. In "A Letter from Martha" in *Living's* February 1995 issue, Stewart directly responds to a male reader's concerns:

We owe Jon Mumford, and all of our male readers, an apology. Jon recently returned a subscriber invitation to preview our *Holidays* book with his comments. Although our letter was addressed "Dear reader," it was clearly intended for women. It referred to women five times, and never once to men. It assumed that only women read this magazine, and that only women would be interested in buying such ancillary products as books and videos.

I think a little explanation is in order. When we launched this publication in 1991, I conceived it as a women's "shelter" magazine. ... In less than four years, however, we have become much more than a "shelter" book. Our subscribers do include many men, as well as women of all ages. And this is because our subject matter—living—and the way in which we approach it are almost limitless in scope. We've learned that stories about cooking, gardening, decorating, and homekeeping have truly broad-based appeal.

I welcome the fact that our magazine is attracting male readers. We are fully aware that many households are now headed solely by men, and that more and more families are single-parent ones. If *Martha Stewart Living* can provide informative and helpful articles that improve everyone's quality of life, then we are happy and our objectives are fulfilled. And to you, the "noncore readers," the Jon Mumfords, welcome. We want to please you and to hear from you (p. 6).

Complaints from male readers continued in the pages of the short-lived feature "Letters to the Editor." *Living's* March 1996 installment included a letter from Jeffery Wilson who wrote that he has been a "steadfast fan" of Stewart's since the publication of her first book *Entertaining*. Wilson is "taken aback that the editorial staff of *MSL* fails to realize the broad appeal of the magazine" (p. 12). He references an article on home offices in the November 1995 issue and suggests that the opening line, "What do most women want?" made him "want to go no further" (p. 12). He asserts that this line and others like it in other articles, make it "clear that the editors have not intended this article—and by extension, this magazine—for me" (p. 12). He concludes his letter by

appealing to the editors to “Please remember that I am a reader, one who anxiously awaits the next issue and savors it when it arrives. Don’t spoil my pleasure in your wonderful magazine by shutting men out” (p. 12).

Vincent Bache III, in the July/August 1996 issue of “Letters to the Editor,” builds on Jeffery Wilson’s comments and offered that “I, too, have on occasion been completely put off by introductions to various articles that seem to suggest that ideas of good homekeeping and entertaining are the domain of females only” (p. 22). He asks “What about those of us out here who are male and live alone?” and suggests that he “would like to see the male reader referred to sometimes” (p. 22).

The male readers’ vague references to single male households, coupled with the magazine’s focus on the domestic and creative arts, suggest that gay men are readers of *Living*.⁶ Stewart’s insistence on pleasing these readers (at least in part by repeatedly printing their complaints), indicates that the gay male audience is one she wishes to keep. Stewart works to keep gay male readers, in part, by making space in *Living*’s later issues for references to and stories about men without making references to wives and children. These articles are markedly different from the overt references to the families and heterosexual partners of the women featured in *Living* since its inception. For example, the August 1994 issue of *Living* features the renovations “set stylist and interior designer” Stephen Earle made to his cottage in East Hampton, New York (Hamilton, W. B., 1994a, p. 65). While the ten-page article cites Earle’s brother Robert and his architect Leo Blackman, and photographs of Earle’s new master bedroom (and other rooms) accompany the article, there is no mention of a housemate or partner with whom Earle shares or hopes to share his new spacious cottage. While heterosexual identity is clearly

marked in many of *Living's* articles (even with single people), the absence of Earle's identity leaves room for the readers' interpretations (Hamilton, W. B., 1994a).

The host of "A Farm Stand Dinner," the cover story of *Living's* September 1994 issue, is "designer and stylist" Tom Flynn who, like Earle, lives in East Hampton (Barbour, 1994, p. 53). The six-page article details Flynn's entertaining philosophies, his recent home renovation and his guests. Photos of Flynn pictured alone or with Stewart suggest that Flynn, like Earle, lives alone (Barbour, 1994). Landscape painter Eric Karpeles is featured in the story, "A Cook's Garden" in *Living's* March 1998 issue. The eight-page article details Karpeles' Pennsylvania life. "A cook and a gardener by instinct and obsession," Karpeles' vegetable garden and the recipes created for the dinner party are the focus of the article (Boswell, 1998a, p. 189). The pictures and text make no reference to a partner or children, only friends. *Living's* February 2003 issue covers a similar dinner party in Austin, Texas (Gordon, A., 2003). The Mexican-themed dinner was held in the garden of James David and Gary Peese and is one of four articles in my sample that featured a man and "his partner." Each of the four of the articles featuring gay male couples was published under the editorship of Douglas Brenner and explored the home of each couple.⁷

Men play a range of roles in Stewart's magazine and television programs, offering their knowledge as craftsmen, but also as designers, chefs, collectors and aesthetes. That men participate in the knowledge production in a women's magazine is not new; for example, Jennifer Scanlon (1995) reports in *Inarticulate Longings*, that Louis Godey, Edward Bok, and Cyrus Curtis all played important roles in the production and success of *Godey's Ladies Book* (1830-1878) and *Ladies Home Journal* (1883-present). What is

different in *Martha Stewart Living* is that the men who contribute are not focused solely on passing knowledge to women to enable them to run their households and contribute (if only in a limited way) to society. Certainly some men play this role, but many others are featured just as women are, with homekeeping and entertaining playing a large role in their lives: they are not just contributors, they are participants.

The September 1996 promotion of Stephen Drucker to editor of *Living* strengthened Stewart's stated commitment to please male readers. Drucker was promoted again to Editor-in-Chief with the May 1997 issue and in the March 1998 issue began a monthly column, "Letter from the Editor," effectively adding a regular male voice to everything homekeeping. Drucker's letter to readers in *Living*'s April 1999 issue demonstrates his witty and campy attitude toward homekeeping:

I like doing laundry. I particularly like using bleach, perhaps a little too much. Washing a sweater always makes me nervous, but ironing a shirt comes naturally to me, always has. Let's hear it for starch.

I am quick to grab the broom but slow to reach for the mop. I would rather wash dishes by hand than use the dishwasher. I fold my towels into precise thirds but have never quite mastered folding the fitted sheets.

I like dust in the country but not in the city. Makes me crazy. I will do anything to avoid washing windows, anywhere, though I'm always thrilled when they're done. I always think I want to polish the silver, but I get very impatient soon after I start; however, I could spend all day waxing wood furniture or polishing shoes.

My basement is very neat. My home is even neater. The office where I am writing this is so neat it unnerves people. I would not, however, recommend peering into any of many drawers or closets; they are not what you would call kempt (p. 36).

Drucker's letter emphasizes that homekeeping is a central part of his life and that the tasks of homekeeping are not solely women's concern. Many of the men in Martha Stewart's media texts work to prove that they are just as good as or better than the women at homekeeping. None suggests he learned his skills from his wife or does it for

his children (many, in fact, reference their mothers as sources of their knowledge)—the tasks of a homekeeper are an integral and pleasurable part of their own lives. In each of Drucker's monthly letters to readers (until he left the magazine in April 2001), he emphasized his credentials and suggested that the other men on staff approach the projects and ideas in *Living* in a similar manner. His column in *Living*'s December 1998 issue recounted the gift-giving habits of three of MSLO male staffers:

I can always recognize a gift from our collecting expert, Fritz Karch, who collects scraps of paper all year long to create wrappings like the red-and-white one [pictured] at right. ... As for that jewel-like silver package I got last year, the one wrapped with surgical precision and tied with those impossible tiny, perfect blue bows, it could only have come from Eric Pike, who designs this magazine. The secrets of his wrapping success are rumored to be double-sided tape (for the paper) and tweezers (for the bows). ... This issue's wrapping story will get you organized and give you a plan. It was created by our master stylist Stephen Earle, whom I once caught ironing his wrapping paper. Stephen hates wrinkles (p. 33).

Though it is clear that women are the primary readers of *Martha Stewart Living*, later changes in the magazine, including the decline in overt references to female readers and the inclusion of male experiences with "living," create a space in *Martha Stewart Living* that invites new audience members and alternate readings of MSLO texts. Further, the ways in which male members of *Living*'s editorial staff assert their own interest and expertise on a variety of homekeeping topics underscores that the ideas and projects in MSLO's media texts have appeal to women and men alike. However, as I discuss below, these openings and expressions are limited by subtle messages in MSLO's texts and the not-so-subtle cultural forces that continue to powerfully link domestic work with women.

Women's Work

Despite Stewart's insistence that she welcomes male readers to *Living*, the many media formats of *Martha Stewart Living* are largely recognized as produced for women,

in part due to subject matter and in part due to the fact that Martha Stewart—a woman—serves as the image and source for much of the content. In fact, while Stewart assures male readers that she and her staff do not think of their content as produced exclusively for women, MSLO stresses to advertisers in its promotional materials that its primary audience is women, despite the presence and influence of a number of male editors and subjects. MSLO promotional materials based on 2003 statistics offer that 87% of *Living*'s readers are female and 63% are in heterosexual marriages; television viewers are 75% female and 35% had children (Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, n.d.). Visitors to marthastewart.com were also touted as mostly female (82%), in heterosexual marriages (70%), and many (40%) had children living in their household (Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, n.d.). Drucker told *Business Week* in January 2000 that he “visualizes the typical reader as a supremely confident 40-year-old woman with a part-time job, a nice house, and a family in the suburbs” (qtd. in “Martha Inc.,” para. 4).

While *Living*, as aforementioned, does share a number of characteristics with its nineteenth- and early twentieth-century predecessors, the fact that *Martha Stewart Living* is primarily read by women (and thus is necessarily created with this audience in mind) does not mean that Stewart's messages about women's roles in the home entirely mirror those produced by Beecher, Hale and Frederick. Cultural historian Sarah A. Leavitt (2001) argues that because Stewart's messages about the home were created “after thirty years of a movement for women's rights and related changes in the relationship of most middle-class women with their homes,” Stewart's version of domestic messages—and the relationship she creates with her audience in the process—would thus be “more complicated ... than previous generations” (p. 126).

A large part of this more complicated mode of address is the fact that now more women work outside the home. Juliet Schor (1991) reports in *The Overworked American*, that in 1990 (when *Martha Stewart Living* magazine premiered), two-thirds of married American women worked in the paid labor market (p. 25). American women were also marrying later and having fewer children (Schor, 1991, p. 103). As a result, women's relationships to their homes and housework have changed. Schor suggests that when women return home from work, they begin a "second shift," working as housewives and mothers; when their hours as employees and housewives are combined, American women work anywhere from sixty-five to eighty hours a week (1991, pp. 20-21).

This change in how women spend their time, combined with messages like Friedan's from feminism's second wave about the perils of homelife, explain why Stewart's texts would necessarily have to address women differently: the range of possibilities for women outside their homes has changed. Simultaneously building on the language of empowerment from second-wave feminism and working to differentiate Stewart's magazine from others, MSLO staff, in their description of *Living*'s target audience, suggest that empowering women is a large part of their mission. For example, Suzanne Sobel, publisher and senior VP-advertising sales at MSLO, told *Advertising Age* in 1998 that their audience is "upscale, educated, intelligent women who are looking for information and want to be empowered" (qtd. in Halliday, para. 9). *Living*'s Editor-in-Chief Stephen Drucker similarly emphasized in *Business Week* that one of Stewart's main messages is "self-reliance" (qtd. in "Martha Inc.," 2000, para. 4). He stressed that Stewart's magazine would never contain an article about "getting a man, dieting or fixing your hair" ("Martha Inc.," 2000, para. 4).

Stewart's attempt to empower women while instructing them on the intricacies and necessities of domestic work results in a collection of media messages about gender that have received both praise and criticism for their impact on women's lives. Some cultural observers have praised *Martha Stewart Living* as a sort of feminist project and characterized it as the work of an accomplished businesswoman who rediscovered and reinvigorated women's domestic knowledge. *Bust* magazine editor Debbie Stoller, for example, argues that Stewart's reclamation of women's work makes her "the most important woman for feminism we've seen over the past 10 years" (qtd. in Willdorf, 2002, para. 20). From this perspective, *Living* rescues and restores an important domain of women's lives.

On the other hand, some criticize Stewart for reviving domestic work so successfully that she has raised expectations, implying that all women should have perfectly decorated and ordered homes like Stewart's. In her analysis of Stewart's growing popularity, *Working Woman*'s Meryl Gordon asked, "Wasn't feminism supposed to free us from this unnecessary, labor-intensive women's work" (1991, para. 8). In this view, the ideas and projects in *Living* add to the already overwhelming pressure women live under to succeed simultaneously at work and home. The cultural tension created by the success of Stewart's version of domesticity was noted by *Time*'s Stacy Perman, who suggested that "Not since June Cleaver has domesticity been so glorified or vilified" (1997, para. 30).

The tug-of-war over Stewart's messages is complicated by Stewart's own relationship to domesticity. At issue is Stewart's public life as a successful businesswoman and her private life as a woman with many homes and few people with

whom to share them. Stewart's lack of a husband and small children may enable her to spend her time cleaning and crafting as she does in her media texts, but the management demands of the media organization she runs would leave little time for Stewart to actually perform the many homekeeping tasks she suggests are necessary for a beautiful and welcoming home. However, Stewart both models the life of a successful working woman and the life of a woman living in domestic bliss. The combination of these two lifestyles, familiar in US culture as the image of "the superwoman," was popularized in part by Stewart's texts and personified in Stewart's image, although it was commonly understood as a representation too complex and contradictory to achieve. As *New York's* Barbara Lippert (1995) suggested:

[Stewart's] a contradictory figure, a walking Rorschach test of dissonance for contemporary women: a powerhouse workaholic insomniac divorcee (and mother of a grown daughter) getting a message out about the need for balance, the sacredness of family rituals and holidays, and the importance of "homekeeping" and "garden keeping" (p. 28).

Vanity Fair's Matt Tyrnauer (2001) made a similar observation: Stewart "sends mixed signals to feminists: on the one hand, she is an icon of female executive triumph; on the other, she symbolizes the kind of anti-feminist Phyllis Schlafly would love—after all, no one but a full-time hausfrau could achieve all that Martha expects of her audience" (p. 402).

What follows is my attempt to map the contradictory messages about gender—and particularly women's relationships to domesticity—in Stewart's texts. I begin with the ways in which *Living* works to create a complex text that acknowledges the ways in which women's relationships to the home have changed, particularly in terms of the work women perform outside the home, the image of the homemaker and the history of

women's domestic knowledge. Then I turn to examine how the domestic tasks in *Living* add to women's work and upgrade standards of performance, and how the constructions of perfection in *Living* set homekeepers up for failure.

It's a Good Thing. In her column "Remembering" in October 1999, Stewart describes a scenario from her past with which *Living*'s mostly female, mostly married readers would likely be familiar. Newly married, a recent college graduate and a new mother, Stewart found that she "craved more out of my life" (1999g, p. 300). Her female friends were pursuing graduate educations or careers; Stewart chose her own path in search of a job that would be "entrepreneurial ... challenging, intellectually stimulating and fun" (1999g, p. 300). After much thought, she joined Perlberg, Monness, and Williams as a stockbroker, the second woman ever hired by the firm. Stewart's discussion of her "first real job" illustrates the winding path her career has taken, but it also signals to readers that even Stewart, whose career is now centered around the home, feels that women need experiences outside the home to feel satisfied (1999g, p. 300).

Because Stewart, a successful businesswoman, is the center of the magazine, and the magazine aims to attract women who work (or have worked) outside the home, Stewart's magazine and television programs embrace paid employment. *Living* magazine's regular column, "Working," described by MSLO promotional materials as "An inside look at women who have turned their life's passions into their life's work, just as Martha has," offers numerous success stories of women who have created their own businesses (Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, 2002).

The "Working" column in *Living*'s Winter 1990 issue, introduces readers to Ina Garten, who left an unfulfilling position as a "Washington bureaucrat" to become the

“spirited owner of a bustling three-thousand-square foot food emporium on Long Island” (p. 28). The spring 1991 “Working” column details the advice of entrepreneur Melissa Neufeld, a paper-goods producer. In February/March 1992, “Working” featured the success of Ruth Owades, the founder of two mail order business, who is described as “one of the nation’s most inventive mail-order entrepreneurs” (p. 36). These stories about women driven by their interests to building successful careers offer an alternative to the many images and articles in women’s magazines that focus more readily on home, family and children.

“Working” has not been a feature in Stewart’s television programs, but segments with renowned female chefs and female experts have featured the success stories of women working outside the home. For example, the July 19, 2004 episode of *Martha Stewart Living* visited the showroom of fashion editor-turned-handbag designer Kate Spade. Stewart reported that Spade had become the “best known name” in handbags in six years and explained to viewers that she chose to interview Spade to inquire about her “entrepreneurial spirit.” Stewart concludes her visit by asking Spade to give *Living* viewers some hints for starting their own businesses (Krzyzanowski, 2004e).

Stewart profiled a woman in an unusual job in the aforementioned episode of *Martha Stewart Living* featuring author Linda Greenlaw. Greenlaw discussed her book *The Lobster Chronicles* in a segment called, “Martha’s Favorite Books;” through discussion of the book (based on Greenlaw’s life), they discuss Greenlaw’s experiences as a professional lobsterwoman in a male-dominated occupation. Stewart asks very few questions about the book in the six-minute segment and, instead, encourages Greenlaw to share her vast knowledge of lobstering with viewers. Stewart describes Greenlaw, a

single woman working in a difficult profession on a secluded island in Maine, as having a “fascinating, funny, full life” (Krzyzanowski, 2002k).

In line with the celebration of women’s accomplishments in the workplace, Stewart’s own successes are displayed through her media texts. Historian Karal Ann Marling (2000) argues that Stewart’s “resounding success as the goddess of Christmas and the queen of Kmart—the tycoon who bought her own magazine back from Time Warner in 1997 after a series of hardball negotiations—makes her a model of feminist entrepreneurship” (p. 137). Just as Stewart serves as the model for her lifestyle suggestions, she also serves as a model of an incredibly accomplished businesswoman.

Through “A Letter from Martha,” Stewart keeps readers up-to-date with her successes at MSLO. For example, in June 1995 Stewart told readers that her television show aired in 150 markets and would soon air twice a day six days a week on the cable network Lifetime (1995f, p. 6). In May 1996, Stewart announced the debut of her syndicated weekly column “askMartha” (1996c, p. 12). In April 1997, *Living* readers learned that Stewart purchased *Living* magazine from Time and created Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (1997c, p. 12). Stewart announces these developments to readers in hopes that they will watch her programs or read her columns; however, these announcements also serve as public celebrations of Stewart’s triumphs.

Though Stewart’s television programs have few regular segments in which Stewart can discuss or display her accomplishments with viewers, the images of Stewart’s luxurious homes and Stewart’s reports of recent activities serve as reminders of Stewart’s success in her career. Stewart invited viewers to witness the launch of her furniture line in the November 6, 2002 episode of *Martha Stewart Living*. The “field trip”

to the High Point, North Carolina, furniture market displayed very little of Stewart's furniture and focused instead on Stewart herself, speaking to the press. The segment also featured the comments Alex Bernhardt, CEO of Bernhardt Furniture, made to the press at the High Point launch of his venture with Stewart. Bernhardt stressed that the line's launch was the most important day of the successful company's one hundred and thirteen years, which underscored for viewers the impact of Stewart's influence (Krzyzanowski, 2002u).

In addition to celebrating her career path as founder of MSLO, Stewart frequently praises the accomplishments of the women employed by MSLO. In November 1997's "A Letter from Martha," Stewart introduces readers to Lenore Welby, Darcy Miller, Lisa Wagner and Necy Fernandes. She praises each woman for finding her "voice" at MSLO (1997g, p. 18). In May 1998, Gael Towey and Sharon Patrick were the focus of Stewart's praise in her monthly letter to readers. About them she said: "I am really proud to have such talented and extraordinary women in my company, and I thank them and all of our other employees for helping make ours a respected and unique organization" (1998c, p. 14). In the June 2004 issue of *Living*, Stewart's column "Remembering" was replaced with "Behind the Scenes," as part of the magazine's redesign to lessen Stewart's presence due to her connection to the ImClone scandal. The new feature introduces readers to MSLO staff members, their contributions, and their successes on a monthly basis, offering readers a chance to understand the work involved with the production of MSLO's media texts and products.

The focus on career successes, discussed above, suggests that Stewart and her staff recognize that their readers have lives and interests outside the home. The regular

celebrations of women's achievements outside the home, whether through Stewart's employees or those of women featured regularly in "Working," suggest that working outside the home should be on the minds of those reading *Living*. Additionally, the frequent reminders of Stewart's accomplishments—either shared directly through Stewart's columns or displayed indirectly through Stewart's homes and lifestyle—offer Stewart's ambition as a model for her audiences.

It is Stewart's image as a female entrepreneur, not her lifestyle suggestions, that Joan Didion (2000) insists is the foundation of her success: "The dreams and the fears into which Martha Stewart taps are not of 'feminine domesticity' but of female power, of the woman who sits down at the table with men and, still in her apron, walks away with the chips" (p. 279). Didion continues: "... Martha is *in charge*, Martha is *where most men aren't and can't*, Martha has *her own magazine*, Martha has *her own show*, Martha not only *has her own corporation* but she has it *in her own name*" (p. 279). Didion may be correct that Stewart's popularity with her audience has much to do with her accomplishments, many of which blur gender lines. Shirley Teresa Wadja (2001) similarly argues that "Martha Stewart exemplifies the (masculine) utilitarian individualism at the heart of the 'do-it-yourself' movement, through her business acumen, self-reliance, and undeniable achievement" (p. 77). Wadja counters this, however, by arguing that Stewart "also re-enacts the selflessness embedded in women's domestic roles" (p. 77).

Despite Stewart's gender identity, however, MSLO's media messages are founded on traditional gender divisions between men's and women's work. MSLO's promotional materials highlight to advertisers that their texts focus on eight "core content

areas” (none of which include paid employment): home, cooking & entertaining, gardening, crafts, holidays, keeping, weddings, and baby & kids (Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, n.d., “Mission Statement”). These content areas are readily recognizable as the traditional foci of women’s domestic work; women’s commitments to the tasks involved in each of these areas have changed, however, as more women began to work outside the home. As a result, one of the tasks of *Martha Stewart Living* is to use Stewart’s image to reconstruct these content areas to make them appealing to women regardless of whether they work inside or outside the home.

Reinventing housework. By 1991, when *Living* magazine was gaining momentum, women’s paid work outside the home was beginning to reduce household standards of cleanliness, encourage men to do more household tasks, and influence families to purchase household services such as meals, day care and dry cleaning (Schor, 1991, pp. 103-104). Domesticity, previously devalued by men as “women’s work,” now seemed unimportant to many women, who chose to focus on employment outside the home. By the time Stewart’s messages achieved mass popularity in the late 1990s, domesticity, as Sarah A. Leavitt (2002) argues, had “become almost a dirty pleasure, an interest for which one must apologize in public settings” (p. 203).

Stewart’s description of her feelings about homekeeping before she began her catering career is indicative of the cultural shift that had taken place after the second wave of feminism. Stewart told Charlie Rose in 1999 that she and her contemporaries felt the “job” of homekeeper was “floundering” and that “we all wanted to escape it. All of us wanted to get out of the house and get that high-paying job and pay somebody else to do everything that we really didn’t think was really worthy of our attention.” Stewart

explained to Rose that, after working outside the home for a number of years, she came to the conclusion that homekeeping “was terribly worthy of our attention” and thus set out to “elevate that job of homemaker” (p. 12).

MSLO’s success and longevity certainly suggest that Stewart’s mission to elevate domesticity resonates with her audience. As Margaret Talbot (1996) argued in *The New Republic*, Stewart, much like the domestic advisors of the nineteenth-century, aims to elevate women’s work by professionalizing it: Stewart works to “apply rational method to the chaos and the drudgery of housework and, in so doing, to earn it the respect accorded men’s stuff like science and business” (p. 33). Thus articles about basic household tasks in *Living* magazine like “Polishing floors” (Peake, 1998d); “Simple sewing repairs” (Block, 2000); “Napkin folding” (Gordon, A., 2001b); and “Washing the dog” (Nebens, 2004); and segments on Stewart’s programs like making applesauce (Krzyzanowski, 2002g); creating a terrarium (Krzyzanowski, 2002x); cleaning cutting boards (Krzyzanowski, 2002aa); and removing stains (Krzyzanowski, 2003e), professionalize work in the home, and reassert the importance of domestic duties to women working outside the home.⁸

For instance, *Living*’s August 2004 story on dog washing, though only two pages, works to represent a relatively simple chore as a serious, well-ordered task. The article’s subtitle suggests it is a “complete guide,” and the first line encourages the reader to take the task seriously with the rhetorical question: “You wouldn’t let anyone else in the house go several months without a bath, would you?” (Nebens, p. 70). The article splits the tasks involved in dog washing into five topic areas: when to bathe, indoors or out, getting started, lathering up, and drying off. A sidebar contains bulleted suggestions for pest

control, and a chart titled “more grooming” offers detailed suggestions for brushing hair, brushing teeth and clipping toenails. The article cites information from “pet expert” Marc Morrone (the host of MSLO’s syndicated *Petkeeping with Marc Morrone*) and features a single image of a large dog in an even larger metal tub of water. Two smaller tubs, one containing a towel and the other a variety of products suggested in the text, are positioned next to the dog’s tub. The article suggests that such a “workstation” include: “shampoo and conditioner, a pad for you to kneel on, a plastic container for wetting and rinsing ... cotton balls, a small sponge, towels, and a blow-dryer if desired” (Nebens, p. 70). The article suggests that if the steps laid out are followed carefully, the pet owner can “cuddle with your pet and enjoy his fresh, clean scent” (Nebens, p. 71).

Martha Stewart Living’s six-minute segment on stain removal was the first installment of a week-long series on the removal of different stains, including lipstick, oil, and red wine. The segment I discuss here centered on assembling a range of stain removal materials into a home kit. The segment took place on the set of MSLO’s studio laundry room, and Stewart, who was dressed in simple clothes and an apron, was accompanied by Jonathan Scheer, owner of J. Scheer & Co., and an “expert in the field of stain removal” (Krzyzanowski, 2003e). Scheer discussed each of the kit’s key ingredients with professional language: he described acetone as “a dry solvent” that should be used in a well-ventilated area because of its volatility, ammonium as “an alkaline gas” used to “accentuate ... oxidizing bleach,” and common laundry detergent as “a digestive agent for protein stains.” Scheer also made suggestions for stain removal tools and suggested home kits should include sea sponges, cotton swabs, eye droppers, three types of brushes, and measuring beakers. Stewart ended the segment by encouraging viewers to make their

laundry rooms “effective stain removal center[s]” and to visit marthastewart.com to download a stain removal chart (Krzyzanowski, 2003e).

Stewart’s use of charts, specialized language, and the promise that proper preparation and careful adherence to prescribed chronological steps for the most rudimentary household tasks will result in successful outcomes presents the tasks involved in household work in a similar way to the tasks involved in work outside the home. Stewart demonstrates to her audience that successful homekeeping depends upon training, expertise, and follow through, just like work outside the home. In short, Stewart, as Talbot (1996) suggests, “makes housekeeping safe for the professional woman by professionalizing housekeeping” (p. 32).

The result of Stewart’s drive to reinvigorate the role of the housekeeper has been a renewed interest in housekeeping by a generation of women for whom household tasks had become a “second shift,” and a rebuilt sense of pride for women who worked full-time in the home. Stewart has given the housekeeper a new image and title—literally renaming the tasks “homekeeping,” a move that suggests a significant addition to the familiar role: it no longer only involves the work necessary to maintain a clean and orderly house, it now includes the work necessary to make a house a warm, inviting *home*. Cynthia Duquette Smith (2000) believes that a large part of Stewart’s appeal stems from this “effort to offer a new approach to the home by elevating and destigmatizing the value of homekeeping” (p. 353).

Many cultural observers have acknowledged and praised the change. Debbie Stoller, editor of *Bust* magazine argued that “Martha has added value to womanly roles given short shrift over the past few decades and kick-started ‘domesticity as a site for

feminist reclamation’” (qtd. in Willdorf, 2002, para. 21). Cultural critic Camille Paglia believes Stewart is “one of the most important forces at a time of crisis in America of the female sex role. She is someone who has done an enormous service for ordinary women—women who identify with the roles of mother, wife, and homemaker” (qtd. in Lippert, 1995, p. 31). *Bitch* contributor Jennifer Newens (1996) praised Stewart for bringing “a little refinement and allure to the chores previously deemed excruciating to the homemaker. Married women, as everyone knows, are not the only people who perform these tasks. She shows her fans—male, female, straight, gay, married or single—that daily household tasks can be enjoyable, and maybe even a little glamorous” (Newens, 1996, p. 13). That Stewart’s goal of recreating the image of the homekeeper touched a responsive chord suggests that the image may have been in need of revision; that working women praised the change in image suggests that MSLO’s appeal to women who work outside the home achieved some measure of success.

Reclaiming women’s lost knowledge. Along with renovating the role of homekeeper, Stewart has been credited with “reclaiming” the lost knowledge of homekeeping. Barbara Lippert (1995) suggests that Stewart offers “information that skipped at least one generation” because the chain of domestic knowledge, traditionally handed down from mother to daughter, broke when more women entered the workforce after the second wave of the feminist movement (p. 28). Lippert describes the audience for lost domestic information as “Children of the seventies—whose mothers worked and brought home Chicken Delight and were taught by a newly liberated *McCall’s* magazine to make friends with their dust balls;” Lippert posits that as a result these women are “perversely drawn to Martha and what she represents” (p. 28). Margaret Talbot (1996)

makes a similar argument, but suggests that Stewart's audience, taught to strive for more than their mothers did, might see Stewart as a modern mother figure:

... it may be that Stewart's special appeal is to women who wouldn't want to take their mother's word anyway, to baby-boomer daughters who figure that their sensibilities are just too different from their stay-at-home moms, who can't throw themselves into housekeeping without thinking of their kitchen as a catering business and their backyards as a garden show (p. 32).

For these women (and many of my focus group participants), Stewart is seen as a champion of women's history, bringing crafts, cooking and decorating back into vogue. Commenting on the renewed, almost feminist, interest in "womanly arts," Barbara Lippert (1995) reported that "In art schools now, crafts and needlework have become subversive media" (p. 28).⁹

Because, as cultural historian Janice Williams Rutherford (2003) argues, women "still feel the effects of time-honored ideology that endows a domestic role for women with considerable value," the renewed priority Stewart gives to housework would have resonance with her audiences (p. 6). Stewart builds upon this resonance and makes *Living's* ideas and suggestions more palatable by framing them with the feminist discourses of women's lost history to encourage women taught to prioritize work outside the home over work inside it that household work is equally—or more—important. By focusing on women's paid employment, professionalizing domestic work and reclaiming domesticity as women's history, Stewart's magazines and television programs invite their target audience, women, to attend to and enjoy messages about homekeeping.

The resonances of a complex text like Stewart's would no doubt be equally complex. While the impact of the messages discussed above could be seen as having a positive impact on cultural ideas about domesticity (namely constructing it as a serious

endeavor and a positive expression of women's creativity), many cultural critics have expressed worry over the impact of the revived interest in domesticity that Stewart's texts encourage—and MSLO's sales figures demonstrate. As the flip side of the positive aspects of *Living's* gendered discourse, next I discuss the more problematic aspects of Stewart's address to women, focusing specifically on how an emphasis on the domestic has brought a new intensity to the standards and tasks of homekeeping, and how Stewart's lifestyle suggestions project an unattainable ideal, potentially setting audiences up for failure.

“Living” happens at home. Cynthia Duquette Smith (2000) argues that Stewart's texts are founded upon the postfeminist notion that equality between the sexes has been won, thus the need for the feminist movement is over, and women are free to “choose” life paths as they see fit. She stresses that messages like Stewart's promote the needs and interests of the individual to the detriment of collective action Smith considers necessary for the improvement of women's lives (p. 339). From this perspective, Smith argues that “While today there are more options for evading full-time domestic work ... popular advice literature like that produced by MSLO nevertheless urges women to spend more time thinking about and working on their homes, even if they also work for pay outside the home” (p. 344).

While *Living* does maintain a relatively untraditional mode of address to its audiences, and include a range of relatively untraditional messages when compared to many of its competitors, Stewart's messages ultimately promote a domestic world. In promotional materials intended for advertisers, MSLO describes the editorial content of *Martha Stewart Living* magazine: articles about “food & nutrition” comprise 39.4% of its

content, articles about “home furnishings/management” comprise 30.1%, and articles about gardening comprise 13.4%. While traditional domestic content accounts for over 70% of the magazine’s content, the more atypical articles discussed above account for far less: “travel,” “general interest,” and “building” each total 2% or less, and “business & industry” and “personal finance” each make up less than 1% of the magazine’s editorial pages. Other miniscule categories include apparel, culture, entertainment, beauty, and sports and recreation (Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, 2003).

More than simply constructing a mediated world that is focused on home and the range of tasks associated with homekeeping, Stewart’s texts contribute to “the continual upgrading of standards of performance,” that Schor (1991) notes has kept constant the number of hours the average American housewife works per week since the 1910s, despite the use of a wealth of tools and machines created to reduce the time devoted to household chores (pp. 84-86). As Schor explains, as women’s time was needed less and less to produce necessities for the home, standards for housecleaning, laundry, cooking, baking and childcare increased, keeping the time spent on daily duties relatively the same (pp. 88-94). *Living* adds to women’s domestic responsibilities by encouraging homekeepers to do by hand projects that could be mechanized, purchased or simply disregarded as unnecessary by suggesting that “convenience is the enemy of excellence” (Talbot, 1996, p. 30).

Martha Stewart Living’s November 2002 article on rug and carpet care is an excellent example of the way in which Stewart’s advice encourages readers to rethink their typical approaches to common household tasks. Citing data from the Carpet and Rug Institute, the article cautions readers that “A couple of passes with a vacuum are

likely to leave one-third to two-thirds of the dirt in your rugs” (Huber, p. 138). To combat the failure of a device meant to make cleaning easier, the article suggests making between four and twelve passes each time one vacuums, depending upon the rug’s proximity to entry ways; additionally, carpets that have not been “regularly and thoroughly cleaned” should receive twice this treatment for a period of three months (Huber, 2002, p. 142). The article additionally suggests regular deep cleaning, instituting a shoes-off rule, and placing high-quality doormats at all entry ways. A chart that accompanies the article offers brief tips for regular vacuuming, cleaning spills, and deep cleaning. Certainly the vacuum is an improvement over previous methods for regular rug cleaning, but *Living* warns that the vacuum is not enough: readers must do more to keep their rugs clean.

Similarly, *Living*’s July 2004 issue suggests that readers rethink their approaches to the most mundane aspects of homekeeping. “Choosing and using the right sponge,” a relatively brief three-page article, laments that “the sponge’s role in most households is ... largely overlooked” (Huber, p. 52). In addition to offering information about the different materials used to make sponges, the article consists of a two-page chart that categorizes sponges by type and use. Each of the seven sponges discussed has different purposes; in listing each sponge’s purpose, the chart implies that it would be necessary to have each of the seven different kinds to successfully accomplish a range of household chores from wiping countertops to dusting lamp shades. *Living* cautions that selecting any sponge for any chore is not appropriate; with the new information the article offers, readers are urged to make smarter choices for even the most basic of household chores.

The October 9, 2002 episode of *From Martha's Home* includes tips for dealing with table linens after a party. Stewart gives advice for removing red wine stains and candle wax, but focuses on the details of hand washing napkins, a process that takes a “couple of hours.” While many might choose to put their napkins in the washing machine, Stewart cautions viewers to use specific techniques to soak the napkins clean. Stewart advises viewers to air dry the napkins and demonstrates techniques for ironing a napkin with a monogram; she emphasizes that her technique makes the napkin look professionally laundered (Krzyzanowski, 2002l).

Though the segment on “pillow care” on *From Martha's Home* is quite short, it gives the viewer a number of steps for properly caring for bedroom pillows. Stewart prescribes four rules for pillow care: all pillows must be fluffed on a daily basis; use a high quality pillow cover and wash it every time sheets are washed; air your pillows on the clothesline or in the dryer once a month; and refill flattened pillows. The steps Stewart offers are not difficult, but fluffing all of the pillows in a home daily and airing them once a month would add a considerable amount of work to a homekeeper's list of chores (Krzyzanowski, 2002y).

In addition to setting new standards for commonly practiced household chores, Stewart's messages also persuade readers and viewers to work the production of handmade crafts into one's regular schedule. *Living* magazine's April 2000 guide to making “pom-poms” serves as an example. The ten-page article displays a range of staff-produced animals, including mice, birds, and rabbits, inspired by animals made by the “renowned” Steiff Company in the 1930s (Nichols, p. 236). The sheer number of steps and the small scale of the projects suggest that making pom-pom animals would be

time-consuming. The article suggests that the ornamental pom-pom animals would be “delightful gifts for Easter or party favors for a spring luncheon” (Nichols, 2000b, p. 236).

The January 2004 issue of *Living* instructs readers on the techniques of calligraphy. Though the skills are described as “easy to learn,” the six-page article schools readers in the art of penmanship by providing them with a list of materials they would need (holders and nibs, inks, guide sheets, paper, blotter, pencil, eraser and ruler), a template for producing numbers and letters, and instructions for putting pen to paper. The caption to one of the images in the article suggests that calligraphy “may conjure Victorian times, but this skill has all kinds of modern applications” (McEvoy, p. 119). The modern applications suggested all center on decorative uses in the home: labels on boxes storing crafts, a homemade family tree, and handmade greeting cards.

Further ornamentation could be accomplished with a crafting idea on *Martha Stewart Living*’s September 26, 2002 episode: pressed flower stickers. Stewart begins the segment by giving instructions for pressing flowers in a professional press or a big heavy book. After discussing the flowers that press best and displaying a number of different types of pressed flowers, Stewart demonstrates the necessary steps. Like many of Stewart’s “good things,” the task itself is relatively simple: drop a pressed flower in the center of a clear sticker and then apply to an item. However, the steps necessary to create a pressed flower are fairly complicated and the occasion for which one would need a pressed flower sticker may be elusive. Stewart suggests that the stickers “personalize” an envelope, particularly that of a wedding invitation. She encourages viewers to use the stickers to embellish a gift, a name tag or place cards (Krzyzanowski, 2002a).

Through its focus on the domestic information deemed necessary for the proper management of a home, *Living* encourages readers and viewers to question the efficiency of their usual approaches to housework. In the process, MSLO's messages contribute to the constant elevation of performance standards discussed above. Adding crafting into the mix also adds to the work women feel compelled to do by suggesting that handmade embellishments represent care and thought. The additional amount of work Stewart suggests that homekeepers undertake to improve the cleanliness and beauty of their homes, offered at a time when women are working harder than ever in and outside the home, raises questions about contemporary American women's complicated relationships to work and home. Meryl Gordon (1991), for instance, argues that Stewart's messages speak directly to working women who are "tired of hitting their heads against the glass ceiling" (para. 10). In this sense, Stewart's messages offer working women "... a return to domesticity as an escape from stressful careers" (Gordon, M., 1991, para. 5). Margaret Talbot (1996) insinuates that Stewart's glorification of domesticity targets women whose work experiences leave them exhausted:

She exploits, brilliantly, a certain estrangement from home that many working women feel these days. For women who are working longer and longer hours at more and more demanding jobs, it's easy to think of home as the place where chaos reigns and their own competence is called into doubt; easy to regard the office, by comparison, as the bulwark of order (p. 31).

However, as I describe next, Stewart's aspiration for perfection may have succeeded in making work inside the home more demanding than paid employment outside the home.

Perfectly manipulative. It would be a simplification to suggest that *Martha Stewart Living* proposes the home as the serene alternative to the stresses of the paid working world. The image of home that Stewart creates is quite the opposite. Many of

Stewart's tasks are difficult and the expectations to complete each task perfectly are high.

As Sarah A. Leavitt (2002) explains:

Stewart's projects ... bring domestic fantasy to a level that many consider absurd. ... With recipes for crackers and breadsticks, and with instructions for wine-bottle-cork bulletin boards and decorative-glass bottle soap dispensers, Martha Stewart brings domesticity to a new level of complicated craft that even her nineteenth-century counterparts did not imagine. To many contemporary observers, the Martha Stewart phenomenon is actually worse than absurd (p. 202).

Margaret Talbot (1996) concurs: "To read Martha Stewart is to know that there is no corner of your domestic life that cannot be beautified or improved under careful tutelage, none that should not be colonized by the rhetoric and the discipline of quality control" (p. 30).

What emerges in *Living's* magazines and television programs is a world in which chores are abundant, tasks are involved, and nothing is quite right unless you do it yourself. For example, *Living's* December 1998/January 1999 article on "Polishing floors" discusses the "preventative measures" that "go a long way toward minimizing wear and tear" on floors. The article uses the floors at Turkey Hill and Stewart's treatment of them as exemplary, in part because the home contains a variety of flooring materials: stone, wood and brick. Stewart uses stone sealer to protect the brick floor in the mudroom and a rag and hot water on her marble floor. Her wood floors receive the most detailed treatment: the floors are treated with three coats of polyurethane that Stewart formulated herself to minimize the shiny surface most commercial polyurethanes produce. On top of the polyurethane, Stewart uses a "clear bowling-alley paste wax" that she applies two or three times a year with a clean cotton cloth (Peake, 1998d, p. 154). Once the wax is applied, Stewart uses a commercial buffing machine (which she owns)

because it is “the only way to bring out the wax’s luster, give it an even finish, and keep the floors from becoming too slick” (Peake, 1998d, p. 154).

The article implies that readers, like Stewart, should buff their floors weekly to achieve the Turkey Hill effect. Accompanying the article are images of Stewart’s floors, the products used, the techniques involved, and the final product—Stewart’s gleaming floors. The captions advise readers about the proper techniques of the processes the articles contain.

An episode of *From Martha’s Home* (airdate October 9, 2002) provides an additional example. The segment on organization begins with Stewart folding towels in front of a large linen closet. She acknowledges that being organized is difficult, but insists that by following her step-by-step demonstration, viewers’ closets can be “useful, orderly and attractive.” Stewart begins her demonstration with table linens and shows viewers how she rolls her linen napkins around a cardboard roll and covers them with clear cellophane; she labels each roll to help identify its contents. Stewart folds bath towels in thirds and places them on shelves according to size and color. She suggests that the viewer make labels to place on the shelves for bedsheets to help keep them organized and use homemade sachets to keep everything “really fresh” (Krzyzanowski, 2002l). In drawers Stewart stores her cocktail napkins and antique linens and separates them with acid free tissue paper to keep them from rotting or discoloring. Stewart moves next to blankets and demonstrate how to affix brass label holders and labels on to the edge of each shelf. She offers that “nothing could be easier” (Krzyzanowski, 2002l).

As Stewart closes the doors to what would be considered a large closet for the average viewer, she explains that the next closet allows her to hang “great big antique

tablecloths and counterpanes for the beds.” Each is identified with hang tags. Stewart suggests that very fine old linens, like the ones Stewart owns, should be stored on big round cardboard rolls wrapped in tissue paper and a plastic bag. The segment concludes with Stewart’s assertion that “organizing your linens like this is just one of the many tasks you have as a homemaker.” She emphasizes that, once one creates an organizational system, it never has to be done again. You can then “proceed to the next task at hand” (Krzyzanowski, 2002l).

Stewart’s audiences would not be surprised to know that Stewart calls herself a perfectionist (Lavin, 1996, para. 28). Though Martha Stewart the businesswoman may exaggerate her obsession with precision, the Martha Stewart constructed through the texts of *Living* is defined by perfectionism. Sarah A. Leavitt (2002) asserts that Stewart’s “creation of an unattainable ideal ... sets women up for failure” (p. 202).

The term “perfect” pervades Stewart’s media messages. “A treasury of trees” in *Living*’s Winter 1990 issue, for example, uses a glossary of evergreen trees to help readers select “the perfect Christmas tree” (“A Treasury,” pp. 66-71). *Living*’s June 1995 issue contains directions for preparing the “perfect hamburger,” which includes selection of meat, chilling the meat before grilling it and selection of rolls. The article warns that achieving the perfect hamburger may not be as easy as readers might think: “At least once in most of our lifetimes, we’ve laid our taste buds on what we deem in retrospect to be the perfect burger ... it wasn’t until later, when we tried to make one just as good, that we realized how wonderful it was” (Spungen, p. 84).

“Perfect piecrust” appears in *Living*’s November 1998 issue. The article includes a recipe for piecrust and six detailed steps for achieving perfection. A piecrust is perfect,

according to the article, when it is “tender, light, flaky, and golden;” in addition to taste, however, adornment is valued. To achieve a perfectly decorated pie, the article includes a seven-step guide to decorating and more than ten examples of piecrusts “decorated to suit the season, occasion or filling” (Perez, p. 108). Additional instances of perfection in Stewart’s magazine include: “perfect gravy” (Porcelli, 2003), “the perfect lamp” (Earle, 2004), and “flawless soufflés” (Porcelli, 2004). The drive for perfection exists in Stewart’s television programs as well, with segments on “the perfect margarita” (Krzyzanowski, 2002t), and “perfect homemade french fries” (Krzyzanowski, 2004c).

Certainly there is no harm in aspiring to make or find the perfect meal, object or craft. However, *Living*’s repeated and regular focus on achieving perfection, with small and large tasks alike, encourages homekeepers to evaluate negatively anything that is less than perfect—including their own efforts. As Cynthia Duquette Smith (2000) argues, Stewart’s focus on achievement and perfection encourage Stewart’s audiences to monitor their own behavior: “MSLO, in effect, guides its audience in a ‘technology of the self’ whereby as individuals they strive to become more disciplined subjects” (p. 345). Much like beauty magazines have been criticized for teaching women to constantly evaluate their bodies and appearance, Smith suggests that Stewart’s messages may train women “in the art of *self-discipline*” (p. 345).

Conclusion

In sum, the messages about gender, work, and domesticity in *Martha Stewart Living* are copious and complicated. Messages about *Living*’s anticipated readers, messages that welcome readers to a new relationship with domesticity, and messages that raise the standards Stewart’s magazines and television programs all demonstrate the ways

in which ideologies of domestic life at the end of the twentieth century are both similar to and different from those at the end of the nineteenth century. Building on changes in sexual identity and gender roles, *Living* works to represent and reach men who enjoy domestic work. As the model for living well, Martha Stewart's own untraditional lifestyle limits the more traditional focus on heterosexual relationships and families often found in women's magazines and television programs. Both work to create a space, albeit a small one, that has the potential to attract a range of audience members and alternate readings to *Martha Stewart Living*.

MSLO's promotional materials, however, draw advertisers by flaunting their mostly-female, mostly-heterosexual readers and viewers. *Living* appeals to and retains these readers, in large part, by recognizing the ways in which women's relationships to the home and paid employment have changed. Adding more complexity to these messages, Stewart's gender identity as a successful businesswoman and a homemaker reverberates through MSLO's media messages. Just as Stewart seems to effortlessly balance the two, *Living*'s messages hold in tension these two aspects of many contemporary women's lives.

Responding to the numbers of women who now work outside the home, *Living* valorizes paid employment and female entrepreneurship while uplifting domestic work by professionalizing it. *Living*, thus, can be read as a postfeminist text that celebrates women's work in all spheres and aims to reclaim the domestic work necessarily neglected by women's attention to the duties of paid employment. From this perspective, taking Stewart's advice recasts domestic work as a choice that women make to celebrate the womanly arts.

Though paid employment outside the home is represented and respected in *Living*, it is by no means the focus of Stewart's magazines and television programs. The result of giving new respect to homekeeping, at least in *Martha Stewart Living*, is the persistent reevaluation and revision to familiar standards and techniques. Respect in Stewart's view requires numerous tasks with numerous steps undertaken on one's own with the expectation of perfection. From this perspective, Stewart's media messages are antiquated and unfairly encourage women already burdened with the workload of the second shift to manage it all effortlessly—to be superwomen.

These two sets of messages are held in tension in Stewart's magazines and television programs; in total, discourses about gender, work, and domesticity in *Living* reflect the ways in which contemporary ideologies of women's roles in the home and women's work outside the home have changed and the ways they have remained the same. How Stewart's audiences negotiate these contradictory messages in the context of their own lives will be the subject of Chapter Four. Next, I turn to *Martha Stewart Living*'s representations of race and ethnicity.

Race and Ethnicity

In his "Editor's Letter" in *Martha Stewart Living*'s September 1998 issue, Editor-in-Chief Stephen Drucker described the magazine as "an archive of American traditions—a record of all the ways that families and regions and cultures set up home, celebrate the milestones of life, and pass along what they've learned to the next generation" (1998d, p. 29). An archive, of course, is a collection of documents and materials, carefully selected for inclusion based on their presumed importance. Drucker's assertion, then, implies that the American traditions present in *Martha Stewart Living* are

important and the absent traditions are not. In this section, I examine the racial and ethnic contents of *Living*'s archive and describe the composition of Martha Stewart's America.

Cultural critics have written far less about Martha Stewart's messages concerning race and ethnicity than about her messages concerning gender and class. In all of the popular press and research articles I read for this project, I found only a handful of cursory references to representations of race in *Martha Stewart Living*. The lack of attention to race in Stewart's texts may be due in part to the deficit of non-white models and guests in Stewart's magazine and television programs, though it may also be due to the fact that Stewart's messages, which center almost entirely on white heritage and privilege, register as "normal" and "typical" to cultural critics and thus the lack of racial diversity in these representations go unnoticed. As Richard Dyer (1997) argues in *White*, "Whites are everywhere in representation. Yet precisely because of this and their placing as norm they seem not to be represented to themselves *as* whites but as people who are variously gendered, classed, sexualized and abled" (p. 3). Dyer stresses that "We need to recognize white as a colour too, and just one among many...." (p. 11). While the range of identifications, abilities, and interests of those represented in *Martha Stewart Living* may give the illusion of diversity, Stewart's magazines and television programs are not racially diverse.

The few references I did find about representations of race in *Martha Stewart Living* mention the dominance of whiteness in Stewart's texts. *Working Woman*'s Jeanie Russell Kasindorf (1995) describes Stewart's lifestyle suggestions as a "romantic, lily-white fantasy" (para. 8), and *New York*'s Barbara Lippert (1995) suggests that "Martha's magazine mostly shows hetero-looking white people sitting down at dinner" (p. 32). *The*

Chicago Tribune's Cheryl Lavin asserts that Stewart's image is one of "WASP-y ease" (1996, para. 22), and scholar Amy Bentley (2001) describes the food featured in Stewart's texts as "whiteness with a high-church, White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) gloss" (p. 90). As I argue below, Stewart frequently references history, traditions, and beliefs drawn from White Anglo-Saxon Protestant heritage (particularly through her regular references to England and New England), but Stewart's background is Polish Catholic and the bulk of her cultural references can more accurately be described as Western European. Taking up Dyer's charge to make whiteness visible, I examine here the particular forms of race and ethnicity represented in *Martha Stewart Living*, using whiteness, heritage, and religion as frames for my analysis.

Whiteness

Patriotic holidays offer a chance to celebrate the "melting pot" that the United States purports to be. Sarah Leavitt (2002) explains that patriotism has long been a staple of domestic advice manuals; *Martha Stewart Living* is no different (p. 199). Annually, "Martha's Calendar" notes important American dates such as Inauguration Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Election Day and Thanksgiving, all of which serve to remind American readers of their patriotic duties and heritage.¹⁰ Additionally, *Living* magazine regularly contains features that offer suggestions for celebrating American holidays such as Flag Day, Memorial Day, the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving. For instance, "Good Things" in *Living*'s July/August 1998 issue contains ideas for "Fourth of July votives" and offers detailed instructions for properly folding an American flag. Articles in *Living*'s July/August 1999 (Conway, pp. 134-139) and June 2004 ("Celebrating," pp. 35-36) issues encourages

readers to fly the American flag more frequently than the holidays that regularly encourage it and offers suggestions for home decorations that incorporate the American flag. The cover of *Living*'s July 2002 issue features a fruit tart with berries and whip cream arranged to mimic the American flag. Stewart's television programs offer similar messages, including segments on collecting patriotic quilts and crafting a patriotic wind streamer for Memorial Day (Krzyzanowski, 2003b), and on baking flag cookies (Krzyzanowski, 2004h).

Though these occasions offer the chance to display America's rich multicultural heritage, Stewart's patriotic suggestions for celebrating American holidays regularly promise diversity but frequently exclude non-white people and traditions. *Living*'s June/July 1992 issue on Fourth of July celebrations offers "a tribute to diversity" through inclusion of a range of small town Fourth of July celebrations from around the country: South Carolina, Missouri, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Arizona (Barnett, 1992, p. 95). Despite the diversity promised by the inclusion of traditions in five different states, the suggestions for celebrating the United States' birthday vary little (festivals, barbeque, fireworks), as do the faces of the people pictured in the celebrations: only one non-white face appears in the ten-page spread.¹¹ The inclusion of a non-white face at all is notable, as few issues of *Martha Stewart Living* include anything but white faces. If Stewart's archive were truly representative of racial diversity in the US, many non-white faces would be present in its texts.

Racial diversity in Thanksgiving, the most prominent of American holidays in Stewart's texts, is similarly limited. Each November issue of *Living* magazine is dominated by Thanksgiving displays and suggestions, as are multiple television episodes

in November; a full two weeks of Stewart's daily program in 2003 focused on Thanksgiving projects and menus, many of which were demonstrated by Stewart and celebrity guests such as television personalities Conan O'Brien and Lorraine Bracco, and singer Sarah McLachlan. While *Living's* November/December 1991 issue chronicles the origins of Thanksgiving, most issues focus on menus, recipes, and decorations for the Thanksgiving meal (Shaw, D., 1991). At least one article from every November issue depicts the celebration of an American family; it is here that the whiteness in Stewart's portrayal of Thanksgiving becomes evident. While the location of each family's celebration is relatively diverse (e.g., Hudson River Valley, New York, Fiering, 1994; South Carolina, Barbour, 1996b; Connecticut, Barbour, 1997; Manhattan, Hall, T., 1998b; North Carolina, Boswell, 1999; Ojai, California, Pearson, 2000; Brooklyn, Porcelli, 2001), the attendees are not—only one attendee pictured in the seven Thanksgiving stories I examined appeared to be non-white.¹²

The relative absence of non-white faces in Stewart's archive of American traditions undoubtedly privileges whiteness by representing white identities through a variety of characteristics and attributes, while narrowly representing non-white identities through stereotyping, if they are represented at all. Stuart Hall (1997b) describes stereotyping as reducing "people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed in Nature" (p. 257). Central to the maintenance of racial order, stereotypes fix boundaries between racial groups, create hierarchies, and exclude that which is perceived to not belong. A careful examination of representations of African-Americans, the one non-white group present enough in Stewart's texts to be analyzed (I discuss others below), reveals that the majority of representations in *Living* are based on

persistent stereotypes that construct whites as intellectual, civilized, and cultured, and Blacks as instinctual and lacking refinement. Though some representations of African Americans in *Living* work to break dominant stereotypes of African Americans, more reinforce ideas about African Americans as subservient to, entertainers for, and lower in class than white Americans.

The first article representing an African American in *Martha Stewart Living* appeared in its August/September 1993 issue. “Growing tomatoes” includes Louisiana produce farmer George Brooks. While a photograph of Brooks sits above the article’s title on its first page, the body of the text does not mention or quote him. Instead, the story discusses the brave action of Robert Johnson (a white man) who dared to eat an entire tomato (then unfamiliar to American pioneers) in Salem, New Jersey in 1820. Building on Johnson’s death-defying action, the article discusses contemporary knowledge about eating and growing tomatoes, including health benefits and growing tips. Brooks’ experience with and advice for growing tomatoes, despite the centrality of his picture on the article’s first page, appear as a sidebar to a group of four images on the article’s second and third pages. In three of these four images, a hand, presumably Brooks’ (it is both Black and male), demonstrates how to transplant and stake tomato plants (Whiteside, pp. 34-40). Brooks’ exclusion from the body of the text masks his authoritative status as a produce farmer; relegated to a sidebar, Brooks’ inclusion seems more like an attempt to add diversity to the magazine than to share the wisdom of an expert.

African American chef Rena Prentis is pictured in *Living*’s November 1996 feature on the Thanksgiving celebration at the Frank Lloyd Wright-built plantation of

Hollywood producer Joel Silver. Although this article focuses more directly on Prentis' skills than does the article about Brooks discussed above, it is clear from the text that Prentis will not attend the dinner like many other chefs chronicled in *Living's* pages; she is there simply to prepare the meal for Silver's guests.¹³ Prentis, the only Black person pictured in the six-page article, is applauded for her turkey, which she deep fries with the help of Martha Stewart (Barbour, 1996b, pp. 122-127). That Prentis cooks fried foul for a wealthy white family on a South Carolina plantation conjures antiquated yet persistent stereotypes about Black cuisine and servitude.

A group of African American singers is tangentially represented in the November 2001 article on the Thanksgiving celebration at the home of Paula Greif and Dan Zanes in Brooklyn, New York. Zanes, founder of the band The Del Fuegos, and his family (all of whom appear to be white) take a walk after their Thanksgiving meal and are met by the Sandy Girls, "five singing baby-sitters from the West Indies," the only African-Americans in the feature (Porcelli, p. 184). While the Sandy Girls were not guests at the Greif and Zanes' home for Thanksgiving, they provide entertainment for the family and their guests after the meal. In each of these three examples, African Americans' knowledge and skills are not represented as significant on their own; their knowledge and skills become relevant only through their interaction with white supervisors and associates, if the reasons for their inclusion become clear at all. Further, there is nothing necessarily representative of African American culture contained in these articles; by relegating African Americans to the sidelines of the features, *Living* suggests that African American culture is not fully worthy of representation.

With Stewart's emphasis on teaching, and MSLO's ability to reach more than 88 million people per month ("Martha Inc," 2000, para. 3), Stewart enjoys a rare privilege to use her authority with her audiences to break cultural stereotypes. *Martha Stewart Living* magazine exhibits this authority occasionally when holidays of importance to African Americans are included in "Martha's Calendar" (Kwanzaa first appeared on Stewart's calendar in 2000, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day first appeared on Stewart's calendar in 2001), or when African American children are pictured with white children in the magazine's pages ("The Easter Hunt," 1991, pp.50-54; "Ice Cream," 1991, pp. 62-67; "Good Things," 1999, p. 110).

Rich representations of the diversity and history of African American culture are more clearly demonstrated in an episode of *Martha Stewart Living* that focused on the culture of Harlem, New York (Krzyzanowski, 2002v). Stewart's voiceover at the beginning of the episode urges visitors to Manhattan to visit Harlem, which she stresses is "rich in history and culture." In her voiceover, Stewart informs viewers of her own connection to Harlem: Stewart's maternal grandparents lived in Harlem, and Stewart attended Barnard College, which she describes as "at the edge of Harlem" (Krzyzanowski, 2002v).

Architectural historian Michael Henry Adams (an African American) serves as Stewart's tour guide for the first segment of the episode, and he generously thanks her for her interest in the revitalization of Harlem. As Stewart and Adams walk the streets of Harlem, he describes Harlem's history and influence. Adams' information and Stewart's positive response to Adams' tour offers viewers a perspective of Harlem that might break stereotypes about the borough's crime and poverty and emphasizes, instead, Harlem's

great cultural and economic importance. Another segment in the episode on the Dance Theatre of Harlem details the career of founder Arthur Mitchell, the first African American male to become a permanent member of a major ballet company. Mitchell describes that he started the Dance Theatre after the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. in hopes that he could give African American youth the important opportunities that he had. Stewart's voiceover for the segment stresses Mitchell's incredible talent and the importance of his school, both to the field of dance and in the lives of Harlem's youth (Krzyzanowski, 2002v).

While these two segments offer viewers the chance to learn about African American culture, and Stewart's affirmation of the importance of such culture presents these subjects as worthy of viewers' time, the remainder of the episode's segments is less diverse. Racial injustice is briefly mentioned in Stewart's segment with Harlem restaurateur Norma Darden, when Darden tells Stewart that her grandfather was a slave who was freed at the age of nine. The conversation then moves to the popular restaurants Darden owns with her sister, each of which is based on the recipes and traditions of their mother and aunt. While the segment with Darden includes a celebratory story of African American upward mobility (without clearly framing it as such), the interaction between Stewart and Darden is awkward and uncomfortable, unlike Stewart's many televised interactions with chefs. Their conversations are relatively formal and Darden calls Stewart "ma'am." Stewart expresses thinly veiled disapproval of Darden's use of French's mustard, yet seems uncharacteristically ebullient about her desire to taste their final product, particularly Darden's "spoonbread" (Krzyzanowski, 2002v).

This formality and cheeriness, which mutates into awkwardness, is displayed again when Stewart visits Harlem's Famous Fish Market, where she attempts to foster a conversation with the market's African American workers on the street outside the market and across the counter where she awaits her order. She jokes with them about wanting the secret recipe for the fried fish batter and repeatedly emphasizes the "tremendous bargain" she received by purchasing their food. Stewart points to the cost of items she ordered on the market's menu (fish, shrimp and chips for \$11.50 and a fish sandwich for \$3.75) and praises the "generous" portions and "beautiful" items she receives. Stewart's strong reaction to the items, both of which were served on paper plates, suggests her own uneasiness in a space and with people with whom she rarely associates. Though her affirmations suggest Stewart is trying to represent the market and its employees favorably, her reactions betray her discomfort (Krzyzanowski, 2002v).

A July 12, 2004 episode of *Martha Stewart Living* continues this pattern with an episode on Kansas City "barbeque master" Ollie Gates (an African American). The segment on "cooking ribs" opens with blues music; from there Gates, owner of "a family restaurant" in Kansas City, shares with Stewart his recipes and techniques for ribs, barbeque sauce and baked beans. Although Stewart questions Gates several times about his use of liquid smoke in his recipes (it, like Darden's mustard choice, seems to be outside the range of what Stewart considers appropriate for fine cooking), she earnestly works to make her guest feel comfortable. As with Darden and the fish market workers, Stewart was uncharacteristically complimentary of Gates' skill and final product, and she addressed him as "Mr. Gates." A few times during the segment Stewart dropped her

usually careful pronunciation and said “cookin’,” as though the change might put her guest at ease or demonstrate her appreciation of Gates’ culture (Krzyzanowski, 2004d).

While the segments on Harlem’s architecture and the Dance Theatre of Harlem represent African American culture and history in new and different ways, the food segments discussed above walk the line between giving visibility to traditional African American recipes and re-presenting stereotypes of African American culture, particularly that African American food is commonly fried or barbequed, and is prepared with ordinary ingredients. Certainly a cultural center like Harlem would have a broad variety of restaurants to showcase. The three food segments described above, similar in the guests’ racial identifications and the genre of food represented (loosely “soul food”), when compared to Stewart’s reactions in each, suggest Stewart’s lack of knowledge about African American food and Stewart’s lack of familiarity with people who would be interested in such foods. When paired with Stewart’s ease in the segments on Harlem’s architecture and dance school, however, Stewart’s awkwardness in the food segments may have more to do with class than race.

Bill Cosby’s visit to *Martha Stewart Living* on November 25, 2003, demonstrates Stewart’s level of comfort with an African American whose class level is similar to hers. Stewart begins the program by stating that on the show she will teach Cosby, “a friend,” how to make croissants. Throughout the segment, Cosby teases Stewart for her French pronunciation of the pastry, and the seriousness with which she approaches the task, yet the two bond over their discussion of the croissants and marmalade at the Hotel du Cap in Cap D’Antibes. In the segment Stewart emphasizes to Cosby that they are making croissants “just like in France,” and when they are finished, she encourages him to

imagine he is on a terrace in France, which he readily does. She ends the segment by thanking Cosby and telling him that the experience was the most fun she had ever had making croissants. She laughed heartily when he responded that she needs to get out more (Krzyzanowski, 2003f).

The curator of Bill and Camille Cosby's art collection, David Driskell, is profiled in *Living's* March 2003 issue. The article stresses that when Driskell was a child, gardening was a necessity for survival (he is the grandson of a slave and the son of a sharecropper), and celebrates the garden Driskell and his wife created as "a labor of love" in their summer home in Maine (Heeger, 2003, p. 72). The feature includes a wealth of pictures of the Driskells' home, gardens, and the food David Driskell prepares from his harvest. The feature's text thoroughly praises Driskell's creativity and innovation, both as a gardener and as "a distinguished painter and international expert on African-American art" (Heeger, 2003, p. 73). The article's stress on the grandeur of Driskell's summer home and importance of Driskell's accomplishments suggests that, like Stewart's interaction with Bill Cosby discussed above, upper-class status makes African Americans, and their history and culture, worthy of inclusion in *Martha Stewart Living* (Heeger, 2002, p. 73).

In "The Spectacle of the 'Other,'" Stuart Hall (1997b) argues that it is not useful to ask whether a racial representation is "right" or "wrong." Instead he suggests that one ask which representations have privilege, or, in other words, what is the preferred meaning of a representation? The relative absence of African Americans in *Living's* archive of American traditions suggests that African American culture has little to offer Stewart's mostly white readers. The occasions when Stewart's texts do include African

American history, holidays and culture—while important as representations that interrupt the mostly white culture portrayed in *Living*—tend to represent African Americans in stereotypical ways: as subservient to whites and as having lower class interests. The stories and segments that break these stereotypes of African Americans do so not by representing the wealth of unexplored African American cultural ideas and artifacts, but by representing African American cultural interests that overlap with white upper-middle class interests. The result is a system of representations in which white culture dominates, and as a result is normalized. If non-white cultures are represented at all, these representations are usually framed by stereotypes. Only rarely do representations of non-white cultures break these stereotypes, and when they do, they do so by adhering to the upper-middle class standards.

Heritage

Although white American holidays and customs are prominent features of *Martha Stewart Living*, a large component of Stewart's lifestyle suggestions are based on cultures outside of the United States. Though Stewart and her staff boast a familiarity with a range of diverse cultures, references to cultures outside the United States tend center on Western Europe. For example, in December 2001, in "A Letter from Martha," Stewart writes that "This year we have looked far beyond the shores of the United States to many other parts of the world that have historically contributed national and religious traditions to our American way of celebrating the holidays" (2001d, p. 12). The issue's contents from "many other parts of the world" include ornaments from Germany, Christmas decorations from Poland, breads from the Ukraine, and foods of Italy and Scandinavia. Often Stewart invokes Western European culture to indicate a level of class or taste to

which her audiences should aspire, but Stewart's reverence for European food, traditions, objects, experts, and travel connotes a racial position as well, reinforcing *Living's* representation of whiteness.

The countries of Western Europe, particularly Britain, France, and Italy, figure prominently in Stewart's writing in *Living* magazine, including notations about upcoming trips to Europe on her calendar, reflections on decorative or culinary influences in articles, and reflections on her previous travels in "Remembering." Stewart's Anglo-Saxon influence is evident in her frequent references to New England (the location of two of her homes, Turkey Hill and Skylands), and in her regular incorporation of British cultural artifacts and experts. For example, *Living* magazine applauds the minimalism of British architect John Pawson (Fonseca, 1996); and celebrates the British China producer Josiah Wedgwood (Prisan, 1997). Stewart, an avid collector of antique Wedgwood, licensed with the British company to reproduce her favorite lines to be sold through her catalog, *Martha by Mail* (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 370). Stewart credits British gardens for her own horticultural style (Hyland, 2001, p. 107), and has adopted the British pronunciation of the term "herbs," pronouncing the "h" that is silent in the American pronunciation (noticeable in the herbs segment on May 22, 2003 episode of *Martha Stewart Living*). British influence is noticeable in *Living's* celebration of Christmas, with instructions for making Victorian Christmas crackers ("Good Things," 1990) and in a feature on the history of and suggestions for creating Victorian Christmas decorations (Nicksin, 2002). While British influences are evident in Stewart's texts, French and Italian references are even more common.

In August 1994, Stewart wrote in “Remembering” about the impact of British and French rose gardens on her interest to create something similar: “I visited Sissinghurst and Mottisfont Abbey in England, and Giverny in France, and I craved knowledge about the kinds of roses I saw there” (1994b, p. 112). In April 1999, Stewart writes of her first and only “Grand tour” of Europe, a month’s long honeymoon in 1963 with then husband Andy Stewart. She wrote that her favorite of the places they visited was Paris, but she describes that she admired nearly everything about the France:

the tree-lined roads; the terraced vineyards; the narrow, winding roads; the vast stone and masonry barns; the varied chateaus; and the great soaring cathedrals that took my breath away minute to minute. The food, too, was mouthwatering: every cheese, every baguette, every croissant slathered with confiture d’abricot (1999b, p. 284).

Stewart referenced her honeymoon once again in April 2002, this time to share her impressions about Italy, which she found more impressive than many of other countries they visited (Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, and Greece): “But nothing had prepared me for what I would encounter in Rome and Florence: the incredible churches and palaces that I could walk through and the paintings that I could see close-up. I was in awe” (2002c, p. 300). The impact of England, France and Italy on Stewart’s interests and style is long-lasting and aspects of these countries’ cultures repeatedly influence *Living*’s texts.

More than likely based upon Stewart’s admiration for Julia Child and self-described youthful ambition to prepare every recipe in Child’s book *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, many of Stewart’s recipes are French (Stewart, 1982, p. 3). Recipes for French foods like brioche (Spungen, 2001), pâte à choux (Porcelli, 2002), and cherry clafoutis (“Dessert,” 2002) are abundant in *Living* magazine, and articles like “A Taste of Provence” suggest the French approach to food is exemplary: “Provençal cuisine may be

simple, but its priorities are unquestionably in order: good taste triumphs over pretense every time” (“A Taste,” 1991, p. 45). An entire episode of *Martha Stewart Living* is dedicated to French ideas and influences (Krzyzanowski, 2004b), as is an episode of *From Martha’s Kitchen* (Krzyzanowski, 2002n). Stewart readily uses French words in her magazine and uses French pronunciation on her television programs: terms like *crème fraîche* (fresh cream), *pâté sucrée* (sweet pastry crust), and *pâté brisée* (pastry dough), are staples of Stewart’s texts—Stewart even calls her chicken house a “palais du poulets” (“Martha’s Calendar,” 2002e, p. 8).

While French cuisine is the most common European cuisine represented in *Living*, Italian cooking is a close second. Magazine features such as an Italian summer lunch (Iverson, 1992), and “A Traditional Italian Christmas dinner” (Porcelli, 2000) are common, as are a range of recipes based on Americanized Italian favorites like pizza and pasta. Italian chefs and restaurants are profiled often on Stewart’s television programs, such as the *Martha Stewart Living* episode that focused on Mediterranean herbs. On this episode, Stewart took a field trip to one of her favorite Italian restaurants in New York City, ‘Ino Panini, to introduce her viewers to Italian paninis (Krzyzanowski, 2002c).

Though Stewart’s texts hold Western European culture above all else, Martha Stewart occasionally references her own Polish heritage. For example, in *Living*’s April/May 1992 installment of “Remembering,” Stewart writes of her childhood memories of Easter. In the column she offers that the church her family attended was “Polish Catholic,” and that their dinner table, full of “traditional Polish foods,” was adorned with “Polish-linen cloth” (1992b, p. 128). In “Remembering” in August 1994, Stewart introduces readers to her paternal grandmother, Babcia Helen. Though Stewart

never overtly describes Babcia Helen as Polish, use of the Polish term for “grandmother” and the description of Helen preparing to garden by “wrap[ping] her coifed silver head in a white babushka, put[ting] on a cotton housedress and sturdy black shoes over her tan silk stockings...” helps to fill in the blanks (1994b, p. 112). In “Remembering” in August 2002, Stewart describes her maternal grandparents, whom she regularly visited in Buffalo, New York, as “Polish immigrants” (2002d, p. 224). An episode on photo restoration on *From Martha’s Home* (airdate October 8, 2002), displays pictures of Stewart’s immigrant grandparents (Krzyzanowski, 2002i).

In 2001, Stewart shared that she was keenly aware that her Polish maiden name might have impacted her incredible success, when she told *Vanity Fair*’s Matthew Tyrnauer that her father believed their last name, Kostyra, labeled him as an immigrant and “held him back” in his career (p. 401). About her own name, she has said: “And if my name were Martha Kostyra—*Martha Kostyra Living*—even that would not have probably gone as well as *Martha Stewart Living*” (Tyernauer, 2001, p. 401). Despite the negative cultural constructions of Poland in the United States, Stewart proudly displays her Polish cultural background in her magazines and on her television programs, mostly through articles and segments that include her mother. Building on the popularity of the television appearances of Stewart’s mother, Martha Kostyra, *Living*’s February 2004 issue contained a feature based on Kostyra’s best Polish recipes: Polish mushroom soup, pierogi, chursciki, and babka (Roach, pp. 92-99). The features and episodes with Martha Kostyra were quite popular with Stewart’s fans, as evidenced by the outpouring of support Stewart received over the November 2007 death of her mother, (Hays, E., 2007, p. 6).

None of these European cultural influences is foreign to US culture. However, their repeated appearances in Stewart's texts reinforce the whiteness so prevalent in *Martha Stewart Living* magazines and programs. Like *Living*'s representations of American holidays, *Living*'s representation of European influences demonstrates an exclusion and lack of appreciation of non-white cultural influences. This distaste for non-white and non-European cultural ideals and practices becomes more evident with an examination of *Living*'s treatment of non-white cultural influences from outside the US.

In "Eating the Other," bell hooks (1992) asserts that "Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture" (p. 21). This is certainly the case in *Living*'s texts, where non-Western culture—cuisine in large part—is served to *Living*'s presumed white audience as an "exotic" treat, usually used to liven up a potentially mundane dinner party or add decorative interest to a humdrum room. As hooks argues, this interest in cultural "Others" is a potentially positive sign of cultural plurality and diversity, but her fear is that in a commodified form of inclusion, "the Other will be eaten, consumed, and forgotten" (p. 39). Stewart's use of Asian, Middle Eastern, Mexican and South American cultures demonstrates hooks' fears.

In *Living*'s July/August 1995 issue, Stewart shares memories of her first experience of Polynesian cuisine when she was a freshman at Barnard College. She describes that once she tried Japanese and Indian food, she "began a serious personal search for the most interesting food in New York" (1995g, p. 112). She recounts that theme parties were popular in the 1960s and 1970s and that anyone who had traveled abroad would entertain with "a few well-chosen recipes from that place" (1995g, p. 112).

When Stewart became a caterer in the 1970s, she adapted “ethnic cuisine” for parties. After discussing the details of a few of her favorite ideas, she concludes that today “we may update the food or reinvent the drinks, but we get the same thrill out of transporting our guests to an exotic locale for an evening, even if we go no further than our own backyards” (1995g, p. 112).

Instructions for a Kabob party in *Martha Stewart Living*’s August 2001 issue demonstrate how Stewart’s repeated inclusion of non-Western cultures suggests that she uses her cultural knowledge—largely based on stereotypes—to add interest to an event, meal or space. For instance, the inspiration to include kabobs (arguably fairly common in the US) comes not from interest in Turkish cuisine, but as a suggestion for entertaining dinner guests: “One of the best ways to keep company entertained at a dinner party is to get everyone involved in the cooking, and a kabob party is an easy and slightly exotic way to do just that” (Neunsinger, p. 126). The article gives a brief history of the origins of the kabob, then emphasizes that the aromas of the included recipes are likely to give guests “the feeling that they’ve been transported to a Middle Eastern marketplace” (Neunsinger, p. 126). If the aromas are not enough to create a distinct mood for the party, a CD by Turkish singer Zeki Muren is suggested to “set an exotic Middle Eastern tone” (Neunsinger, p. 133). For readers who may feel that a Turkish ambience is not of interest, the article offers that “Cuban meringue will loosen the mood; reggae will summon an island ambience....” (Neunsinger, p. 133). Here, Turkish culture is incorporated as a device for creating an experience that will make an impact on guests. Additionally, the suggestion that Cuban or reggae music could easily be substituted into the party as mood

enhancers suggests that nothing specific about Turkish culture is necessary for the success of the party—any “foreign culture” could be inserted.

Similarly, *Martha Stewart Living*’s November 4, 2002 episode boasts a Mexican theme (Krzyzanowski, 2002t). The episode begins with Stewart arranging flowers indigenous to Mexico in Fiesta Ware pitchers, then moves to a segment on crafting papel picado (Mexican paper decorations) and a segment on how to warm tortillas. The longest segments of the episode focus on faux bois artist Carlos Cortez and author and chef Zarella Martinez. The segment featuring Cortez never mentions any connection to a Mexican heritage; it is left to the viewer to assume that because of the artist’s last name and Texas studio there must be some correlation. Martinez has a more pronounced link to Mexican culture as an expert in Mexican cuisine. While she and Stewart work together to make red snapper with a Mexican sauce, they discuss the Spanish influence on Mexican cooking and Martinez expresses excitement over the inclusion of regional Mexican cuisine in the US. The episode ends with a segment on making a “Skylands margarita” (named after Stewart’s Maine home), and a segment on the Sago palm (native to Japan) (Krzyzanowski, 2002t). Like the *Living* article on a kabob dinner party discussed above, this episode, under the auspices of a Mexican theme, cobbles together disparate cultural items, some of which are not Mexican in origin, and packages them based on stereotypes as if they speak in some authentic way for Mexican culture. The texts created in this fashion suggest that Stewart and her staff either do not have the cultural knowledge necessary to create a unified text or do not care; similarly, this culturally insensitive bricolage may suggest that Stewart’s audiences are not expected to notice or be offended by the anomalies in such compilations.

However, not all of *Living*'s references to non-Western cultures follow these narrow and stereotypical frameworks. Similar to the use of experts discussed previously, some of *Living*'s articles and episodes on non-Western cultures feature cultural experts in order to give the information a sense of authenticity (especially television segments featuring chefs creating non-Western dishes, like the one with Zarella Martinez described above). These segments offer an opportunity to communicate and celebrate multicultural difference. *Living*'s September 1998 article, "Fiesta cubana" features a party hosted by interior designer Desiree Caskill, who has never been to Cuba, but whose mother and husband are Cuban. The article stresses that the dinner party she threw in her Coral Gables, Florida home was inspired by her mother's "stories about the rich culture of Havana in the fifties...." (Conway, 1998c, p. 230). Though the feature does include a brief history of Cuba's cultural influences, the bulk of the eight-page spread is photographs of Caskill's Cuban-inspired decorations for the party, including brightly colored tableware accented by the leaves of tropical plants. The article applauds Caskill for setting the mood with "an intoxicating combination of Cuban cocktails and music" (Conway, 1998c, p. 230). After dinner, Caskill's husband Luis passes out Cuban cigars to their guests (Conway, 1998c, p. 230). Framed as a story about a couple who "entertain often as a way of celebrating their culture with friends and family," the cultural knowledge seems packaged less for emulation than for social voyeurism, as a way to peek into another culture to understand the significance of their interests and practices (Conway, 1998c, p. 230).

Of all of the non-Western cultures featured in Stewart's texts, Asian cultures are the most frequently referenced. The February 1998 issue of *Living* includes a feature

story on the Chinese game Mah jongg, which explains that the game was brought to the US by an American businessman in the 1920s. The game was immediately popular, the article suggests, because in the early 1920s “America was fascinated with chinoiserie; anything with a whiff of Far East exoticism was irresistible” (Trucco, 1998a, p. 96). Remnants of this fascination live on in *Living*’s magazines and television programs that commonly incorporate images and ideas based on Asian culture. For example, on the October 11, 2002 episode of *Martha Stewart Living*, Stewart offers viewers suggestions for organizing their handbags with items from her favorite store in Japan. She emphasizes that she picked up the items on a recent trip (Krzyzanowski, 2002s). One of the four trees included in an article on Christmas tabletop trees in *Living*’s December 2001 issue is an “origami tree,” decorated with origami cranes and fans—two Asian girls sit at the tree’s base (Baker, p. 171). An episode of *From Martha’s Garden* features a visit to a Portland, Oregon, garden, which is considered the “most authentic” Japanese traditional garden outside of Japan (Krzyzanowski, 2002m). The degree to which Asian influences are a part of Stewart’s own personal style is highlighted in *Martha Stewart Living*’s November 2001 issue, which features an eight-page spread of the use of red in Stewart’s home in Bedford, New York. Each of the four rooms pictured, all of which are decorated with “Asian-inspired themes,” includes numerous pieces of Chinese and Indian furniture, Chinese tableware, and Turkish rugs (Wallis, 2001b, p. 231).

The consistency of *Living*’s use of the term “exotic” in descriptions of Asian foods underscores the intention behind the inclusion of Asian items. The July/August 1997 issue of *Martha Stewart Living* includes recipes for Vietnamese fruit shakes, which are described as “refreshing and exotic” (“Good Things,” p. 57). *Living*’s November

2001 issue includes an article on collecting Chinese export porcelain, which was perceived by seventeenth-century Europeans as an “exotic marvel” (Hine, 2001b, p. 197). A glossary of Asian greens in *Living’s* March 2004 issue aims to “demystify” the “exotic leafy greens” (“Contents,” p. 11). The October 10, 2002 episode of *From Martha’s Kitchen* features author and chef Su-Mei Yu, who offers that her recipe for Hot and Sour soup contains “exotic ingredients” (Krzyzanowski, 2002q). In Stewart’s texts (and homes), Asian artifacts and recipes continue the European-American’s fascination with their stereotyped notions of the “Far East,” connoting exoticism and suggesting that Asian culture can be purchased and consumed in order to add flavor to American lives (Krzyzanowski, 2002q).

Not every inclusion of non-Western culture is revered in its original form, however. In many instances, cultural items and processes are translated by Stewart and her staff to render them more appropriate for American audiences. Though all cultural customs go through interpretation when introduced into a new culture, *Living’s* revisions imply that some forms of culture are not valuable in their original form and need revision by those with the cultural knowledge necessary to improve them. For instance, *Living’s* June 1999 issue contains a feature about a dinner party thrown by *Living’s* deputy style editor Ayesah Patel, who was born in Bombay. Patel stresses that she wanted to throw a party to introduce her friends to the diversity of Indian cooking, which she believes has not been fully understood in the United States. Patel explains that through the inclusion of the dishes highlighted in the magazine, she hopes to change “the American perception of Indian food as spicy, heavy, and greasy” (Hall, T., p. 171). Part of Patel’s attempt to change her friends’ perceptions, however, required her to alter the meal’s recipes. The

meal Patel serves is “modeled on an American barbeque” and includes three traditional Indian salads, though Patel discloses that the inclusion of three salads is “unconventional” for a “typical Indian dinner” (Hall, T., p. 171). Further, the soup Patel served was created by “combining favorite flavors of her native and adopted lands” (Hall, T., p. 175). Finally, Patel’s dessert, Kulfi cake, is not an Indian recipe, but is “inspired by a traditional frozen Indian dessert” (Hall, T., p. 176). While Patel’s “revisions” of traditional Indian recipes are reasonable adaptations for someone raised in India who now lives in the United States, the changes make it difficult to see which recipes have been overlooked in American perceptions of Indian food, and which recipes Patel altered to make them more pleasing to her American guests and Stewart’s readers.

Further, the text that accompanies *Living*’s June 1997 “Fit to Eat” column boasts that it has translated traditional Middle Eastern recipes, which usually “call for lots of oil and frying” into “a healthful meal” for readers (p. 142). Curry dishes are similarly adapted in *Living*’s October 2001 “Fit to Eat.” The traditional Indian dishes are praised for being “full of heat and flavored with a pungent blend of aromatic spices,” but have been reconfigured to remove “excessive fat and calories” (p. 242). As described in Appendix A, the “Fit to Eat” column was added in 1994 to give readers low-fat versions of favorite recipes, however, the column’s name takes on new meaning in connection to the revision of non-Western recipes—literally suggesting that *Living*’s alteration of these foreign meals makes them more appropriate for Western palates. These revisions of non-Western cuisine arguably remove essential components of the recipes—those which made them originally appealing for inclusion in *Living*’s texts. The stripped-down recipes in Stewart’s texts prompted Amy Bentley (2001), writing specifically about Stewart’s

recipes, to suggest that “Even so-called ‘ethnic’ dishes that appear in MSL ... are absent any real trace of ethnicity” (p. 90).

Living’s revision of non-Western culture does not only include recipes. The aforementioned article about Mah jongg suggests that Asians and Asian Americans play Mah jongg “fast and noisy,” while in the United States a “more genteel strain developed” among European-Americans (Trucco, 1998a, p. 97). Further, *Living*’s August 2001 issue features an article about the history of batik printing in Indonesia. It describes how “A single yard of the most sumptuous Javanese pattern might take up to a year to produce,” but promises that “with our quick method, using kitchen tools and other household items as wax stamps, you’ll be able to make a collection [of batikked items] in a day or two” (Nichols, p. 102). Certain motifs on Indonesian batik fabrics, according to folklore “bring good health,” however, *Living*’s suggests “improvised patterns ... promise only to brighten a tabletop” (Nichols, 2001b, p. 106).

In sum, Stewart’s magazines and television programs regularly represent Western European cultures and traditions as valuable and influential. Stewart’s inclusion of the cultural artifacts and practices of non-Western cultures, on the surface, seems like a commendable effort in an American culture that increasingly reveres diversity. On the other hand, a thorough examination of the frameworks through which these artifacts and practices are presented to Stewart’s audiences suggests that *Living*’s use of non-Western culture seems to reassert a privileged whiteness that uses cultural Others for its own satisfaction. In other words, the non-Western cultures themselves are less important to Stewart’s texts than the ways in which they can be used to enhance her lifestyle suggestions. Thus, the incorporation of non-Western cultures into *Living*’s texts promises

Stewart's audiences an "exotic" cultural experience unlike, yet complementary to, that offered in Western culture, and by nature of Stewart's authority to use and discard cultural artifacts at her discretion, simultaneously strengthens the boundaries that keeps non-Western cultures in the position of "Other."

Religion

In her column, "Remembering" in *Living's* December 1992/January 1993 issue, Martha Stewart writes of "Celebrating Differences" in her childhood home on Elm Place in Nutley, New Jersey. She writes about the neighborhood's religious diversity and notes that her neighborhood contained an equal number of Jews and Christians, and one Buddhist family and one Muslim family. Stewart's family was Catholic, and she insists that despite the religious groups' differences, the families were on friendly terms. Stewart observes that when it came time for religious observance, "we each went our own way" (1992d, p. 119). Though she was curious about each group's practices, she admits she did not even know when and where the Buddhist and Muslim families worshipped. Stewart's theme of religious tolerance continues through the example of her marriage to Andy Stewart, who is Jewish. Stewart insists that her Catholic family "cheerfully included him in our holiday celebrations," and, over time, the Stewarts "invented our own family rituals," many of which they have kept to the time at which Stewart writes (1992d, p. 119). The conclusion to Stewart's story, which ties in nicely to *Living's* aforementioned mission to archive American traditions and rituals, offers that "The traditions that unite us are the most essential of all" (1992d, p. 119).

Though Stewart's Catholic background and practices are rarely referenced in her magazines and television programs, Christian religious holidays figure prominently in

Living's spring and winter issues and episodes. *Living*'s very first issue in Winter 1990 features handmade gifts and gift wrap, Christmas greenery and trees, home decorations, holiday menus and parties, and Christmas cookies, all of which and more have been the subjects of every December issue since. Stewart's December calendars annually note Christmas day, when she plans to decorate, and with whom she will celebrate the holiday. Multiple issues of Stewart's "Remembering" column recall her memories of Christmas as a child (1990; 1995j; 2000d; 2001e; 2003c); as the mother of a small child (1991b; 1994e; 1996e); and in more recent years (1997h; 2003c). *Living* magazine features family Christmas celebrations in Stewart's homes (Barbour 1996c; Bosswell, 1998b) and Stewart's annual holiday prime-time specials guest-star Stewart's family and friends (1995-2001). Yet, absent in each of these articles and episodes of Stewart's Christmas celebrations are Stewart's own religious observances of Christmas.

Stewart boasts in her December 2002 "A Letter from Martha" that "Christmastime at *Martha Stewart Living* begins at the height of summer" (2002f, p. 8). Menus, decorations, and photo shoots are all prepared months ahead of time, which suggests that far from focusing on the religious significance of the holiday, MSLO's preparations are focused on the accoutrements for the celebration of the Christmas holiday. This is confirmed in Editor-in-Chief Stephen Drucker's December 1998/January 1999 "Editor's Letter," when he shares his surprise of how Christmas is celebrated at MSLO: "... nothing prepared me for Christmas at *Martha Stewart Living* magazine, where for one week each December there is a gentle, constant flurry of magical packages like none I have ever seen" (p. 33). Stressing the importance of each staff member's presentation of holiday gifts offers further insight into the way the holiday is conceived,

constructed, and celebrated by Stewart and her staff: Fritz Karch “collects scraps of paper all year long” to create intricately wrapped gifts, Melissa Morgan gave Drucker “a discreet black box,” and Martha Stewart’s gift to Drucker was “such an event, it didn’t need a card” (Drucker, 1998e, p. 33). Christmas, in *Living*’s texts, is a religious holiday largely absent of religion—the secular preparations and decorations of this Christian holiday are what matter most.

The Christian holiday Easter is also present in *Living*, and while it is less prominent than Christmas—it does not warrant its own prime-time television special or dominate the content of most articles in the magazine’s April issues—its religious significance is a bit more present. Like Christmas, Easter is an annual feature on “Martha’s Calendar,” as are Palm Sunday and Good Friday. Though Easter features are absent from *Martha Stewart Living* in its March 2002 issue, save the holiday’s mention on “Martha’s Calendar,” the magazine regularly contains suggestions for Easter egg hunts (“The Easter,” 1991), bonnets (Smith, D., 1992), baskets and treats (“Grass,” 1993; “Good Things,” 1996a; Peake, 1999a; Nichols, 2000a; Nichols, 2001a); eggs (“Good Things,” 1993; “Good Things,” 1994; “Good Things,” 1995c; Conway, 1997; Weisman, 1998; Okrent, 2001; Kaplan, 2003; Prisant, 2004), and menus (Hartocollis, 1996; Hall, T., 1998a; Neumeier, 1999; Bosswell, 2001).¹⁴

Though Stewart frequently writes of Christmas memories, Stewart writes of Easter only twice in “Remembering,” and both columns stress her family’s religious practices as well as celebratory preparations. For example, in *Living*’s April/May 1992 issue, Stewart recalls, “For the Easter holidays we were especially faithful in our observance, attending Mass on Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. Our

church was Polish Catholic: Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in Nutley, New Jersey” (1992b, p. 128). In April 2003, Stewart focuses a bit more on her family’s holiday rituals, but stresses this work was done in between the services they attended for “Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday” and Easter Sunday (2003a, p. 220). Thus, while Christmas and Easter are prominent religious holidays in Stewart’s texts because of their significance as Christian holidays in the United States, their religious significance is downplayed. Instead, *Living*’s treatment of both holidays focuses on the lifestyle suggestions for crafts, cooking, decorating and entertaining on which Stewart’s texts are predicated.

Just like Stewart’s knowledge of and interest in religious difference does not extend far beyond Protestantism, Judaism and her own Catholicism, Stewart’s texts do not portray much religious diversity. In April 1995, the first article to focus on a non-Christian religious holiday appeared in *Living*. The article, “A Passover Seder,” chronicles the family celebration of *Living*’s Style department associate editor Darcy Miller. In her reflection on the feature in her monthly letter, Stewart suggests that she attended the event at the Millers’ Manhattan apartment because “I am eager to learn how others celebrate their holidays” (1995c, p. 8). The article focuses on the history and rituals involved in the Seder, which is celebrated to teach children about Judaism (Abramovitch, 1995).

Living’s December 1998 issue includes a feature on the celebration of Hanukkah. This article chronicles the celebration at the Manhattan home of Edward and Vivian Merrin, who host three generations of their family for the event. Like many of *Living*’s features on family celebrations of Christmas, the article describes the family’s rituals and

traditions and includes recipes for the dishes served at the celebration (Hall, T., 1998c). Like Christmas and Easter, Hanukkah, Passover, and Yom Kippur are regular features on Stewart's monthly calendar, and though features on these Jewish holidays are less frequent than the Christian holidays, suggestions for accompaniments to these celebrations are included as "Good Things" (1996b; 1997b; 2004b) and as stand alone articles on items such as Passover desserts (Asimov, 1998), matzo balls (Asimov, 1999), dreidels (Brink, 2001b), antique menorahs (Kaplan, 2002).

Tolerant and eager to learn as Stewart claims to be, religious holidays and experiences that are not Christian or Jewish do not appear in *Living's* texts. Just like her neighborhood experiences in Nutley, New Jersey, Stewart represents the more mainstream Judeo-Christian religious holidays—deeming them worthy of readers' interest—while other religious practices and experiences present in the United States go unnoticed. Religion is downplayed, however, in *Living's* representations of Easter, Passover, Hanukkah, and Christmas celebrations, while the decorations, gifts, rituals and traditions that have developed around these holidays are regularly depicted. The lack of religious practice or significance in Stewart's texts, however, is not unlike the American celebration of these holidays on a national scale. In many ways, Christmas and Easter, as celebrated in the United States, are more cultural holidays than religious ones, and thus the lack of religiosity in *Living's* texts is similar to its representation of race and ethnicity in general—it is a reflection of, not a deviation from, American mainstream white culture.

Conclusion

The archive of American traditions that is compiled in the texts of *Martha Stewart Living* tells only one story about the United States: that its citizens are white, of European heritage, and of Judeo-Christian faith. While Stewart's texts on occasion break the monotony of this dominant representation, they usually do so according to racial stereotypes and upper-middle class norms. The result is a depiction of whiteness that portrays white people as "individual and/or endlessly diverse, complex and changing" while reducing "the non-white subject to being a function of the white subject" (Dyer, 1997, p.13). As I insinuated in this section, *Living's* representations of white and non-white subjects and cultures are directly tied to class; it is to an analysis of class that I turn in the next section.

Taste and Class

In her October/November 1992 "Remembering" column, Martha Stewart offered that: "The foundation of taste is comparison: the examination of two things to see which is the better, then the adding of a third to see which is best." Stewart's principle of comparison mirrors sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) conception of "distinction," a habituated cultural practice through which people position themselves and others according to their aesthetic judgments: "Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions that they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed" (p. 6). Bourdieu argues that class difference is not only economic, it is cultural and social as well; thus a more complete understanding of class must take account of the roles of

cultural capital (sensibilities accumulated through familial and educational socialization) and social capital (status acquired through group membership and networks).

Though she does not address Bourdieu directly, Martha Stewart's lifestyle suggestions do draw from this complex conceptualization of class; through *Martha Stewart Living* she trains readers and viewers how to make distinctions that build cultural capital. She does this by representing an elite class aesthetic, what Bourdieu calls "legitimate taste" (1984, p. 16), and holding out the promise that readers and viewers can raise their class levels, just as Stewart did, by learning to have good taste. As I discuss later in this section, Stewart suggests that one of the goals of an increased cultural capital, taught through *Martha Stewart Living*, is increased social capital; combined, the increases in cultural and social capital offer readers and viewers a path to social mobility.

To demonstrate how Stewart learned to make such comparisons with confidence, she shares with readers examples of her training: comparing books as a child at the Nutley Public Library, and comparing works of art at the Newark Museum in high school and at Barnard College in art classes. She emphasizes that "Applying the principle of comparison helped me discover the keys to great literature, art, and design" (1992c, p. 135). Touting the success the principle has brought her, and holding this principle up as a standard by which readers should live their own lives, Stewart concludes her column with the suggestion that: "This principle of comparison, by which one arrives at a standard of perfection, applies to many areas of life" (1992c, p. 135).

Stewart's principle of comparison thoroughly influences the structure and content of *Martha Stewart Living*. Comparisons abound in Stewart's texts that position upper-class tastes alongside more modest ones: comparisons between Stewart's childhood in

Nutley, New Jersey, and Stewart's adulthood in New York and New England; comparisons between luxurious lifestyles and do-it-yourself suggestions; and comparisons between quick tips or "Good Things" and overdone instructions for expensive and time-consuming projects. The range of taste levels and class positions in *Martha Stewart Living* makes Stewart's messages and products accessible to audience members with a variety of class identifications who are likely to find ideas in Stewart's texts that are adaptable to their lives. This range of taste levels is present also in Stewart's largest retail lines: the modestly priced Martha Stewart Everyday at Kmart and the upscale Catalog for Living. However, the underlying purpose of Stewart's comparisons, as her "Remembering" columns suggests, is to teach audience members to become "discriminating" like Stewart through the transmission of her acquired taste through her texts, and to present Stewart's life and suggestions in such a way that encourages audiences, through comparison of their own lives to Stewart's, to emulate Stewart's life as projected through her texts. As its title suggests, *Martha Stewart Living* offers Stewart's life as the proper way to live. In the sections that follow, I use Stewart's principle of comparison to illuminate the range of messages about taste and class in Stewart's magazines and television programs.

Comparing Stewart's Childhood and Adulthood

Stewart's childhood and adulthood are frequently compared in the pages of *Martha Stewart Living*, where Stewart's monthly childhood reflections in "Remembering" meet the contemporary representations of Stewart's adult life in New York and New England scattered throughout the magazine's pages. Though Stewart repeatedly insists that her home life was a happy one, her descriptions of her life in

Nutley, New Jersey often suggest that the Kostyra's low income level indelibly marked her childhood. For example, Stewart writes about the lack of privacy in the small home for her large family: "By [1950], our family had grown to seven, and I often read the Sunday papers in the car to get away from the noise of my siblings" (1995d, p. 144). In 2000, Stewart remembers that the eight people in her family "slept in three and half bedrooms" and shared one full bathroom (2000, p. 76). She describes how she was often the last in her family to go to bed because she was "luxuriating in a few minutes of peace in the long enamel bathtub before retiring to the double bed I shared with my sister Kathy" (2000a, p. 276).

Stewart reveals just how tight her family's budget was when she writes about what a "special time" the arrival of the Sears/Roebuck catalog each year was for the Kostyras, and stresses that the catalog was used more for fantasy than shopping: "Mother shopped longingly through the myriad household-goods pages, dreaming of what she would like to buy, knowing full well that few, if any, of her wishes would materialize in big brown boxes ... (her household budget allowed hardly anything for 'extras')" (1996c, p. 156). She expresses with frustration that the Kostyras "were the last family on Elm Place to get a television. The primary reason for this was economic, I'm sure" (1997e, p. 216); that the family's "towels were different colors ... and mostly old and rather threadbare. I remember them as scratchy and stiff as boards because they were washed without softeners and dried on the line in the yard (we had no dryer)" (1993, p. 124); and that the family's one bathroom for eight people was not well-appointed: "Ours had separate and very annoying hot- and cold-water taps (which either scalded or froze your

fingers), no electrical outlet, and a tiny medicine cabinet with four narrow shelves” (1993, p. 124).

The Kostyras’ tight financial situation becomes all the more clear when Stewart “remembers” her first encounters with the substantially more affluent world of her fiancé, and later, husband, Andy Stewart. In 1960, just after she became engaged, Stewart had a date with her fiancé for “my first fancy, formal New Year’s Eve” in Times Square. Stewart reports that she nervously “spent hours getting ready” and “had a private cry in front of my almost-empty closet, feeling sorry that I had so few clothes to choose from for my first big night out with my fiancé” (1998h, p. 288). She wore her only party dress, which she had sewn herself, and felt herself to be “seriously underdressed and underjeweled” (1998h, p. 288).

Shortly thereafter, Stewart accompanied her soon-to-be-husband on a ski trip to Stratton Mountain in Vermont. Andy had “attended the Putney School in Vermont, where he learned to ski well on the icy slopes of the Green Mountains,” but Stewart had never skied, had to rent equipment, and hit the slopes without instruction (1995b, p. 134). She fell, twisted her knee, and “hobbled” around for the whole weekend. This experience prompts Stewart to reflect on why her parents had not taught her and her siblings the “social sports,” which she lists as tennis, skiing, waterskiing, and sailing (1995b, p. 134). She suggests that “it had to do with the fact that Mother and Dad had to struggle so much just to feed the family that these expensive and time-consuming sports had no place in our lives” (1995b, p. 134).

In many of her columns, Stewart directly links her present day interests and possessions to her family’s lack of resources. For instance, Stewart’s experiences with the

bathroom on Elm Place influenced the bathrooms she remodeled as an adult at Turkey Hill and her East Hampton homes, where she chose: “floors of cool white marble, extra-large showers with glass doors and sit-down benches, roomy medicine cabinets, excellent light, and fine fixtures” (1993, p. 124). She boasts that “I have gone from one bathroom for eight people to eight bathrooms I can share” (1993, p. 124). Stewart describes herself as a “fanatic bed-linens collector” in her May 1997 column and suggests that her family’s disappointing bed linens influenced her desire to collect: “That only a very few of our pillow slips were embellished by any embroidery or decoration ... was all the more reason why I would later feel compelled to buy elaborately adorned bed linens (1997d, p. 188). Of her New Year’s celebrations since her first fancy event, she says “I always know I’ll be somewhere exotic in the world on December 31—this year in China or South Africa or on the Amazon” (1998h, p. 288).

While “Remembering” allows Stewart to reflect on her humble beginnings in Nutley, New Jersey, “Martha’s Calendar,” “A Letter from Martha,” and the pages and segments of *Martha Stewart Living* display Stewart’s present class position. In Stewart’s calendar, her daily notations reflect her class status. For example, Stewart’s calendar lists the many tasks she must accomplish in order to manage her many homes, such as: schedule lawn and garden maintenance (1994b, p. 10), open pools in Westport and East Hampton (1998b, p.10), prepare her sailboat, Good Thing, for its first voyage of the season (1998c, p.8), and interview potential seasonal gardeners (2002a, p.2). Also noted on Stewart’s calendar are the number of trips she takes; for example: climbing Mount Kilimanjaro (1993, p.6), touring the Galapagos Islands (1995b, p.4), cruising the Adriatic Sea (1996b, p.6), attending the Winter Olympics in Japan (1998a, p.6), and visiting

Antibes, France (2002d, p.4). Some notations reflect Stewart's participation in a high culture world of exclusive events: "Paw Paw [one of Stewart's dogs] in National Dog Show in Portland, Oregon" (1998c, p.8), "nephew Chris Herbert's voice recital at Yale" (2001a, p.10), "plant trial roses for Martha Stewart namesake" (2002b, p.10), and "Tony Marshall's birthday party in Istanbul" (2002c, p.4).

In "A Letter from Martha," Stewart similarly shares with readers the marks of her privileged life. In October 1995, she explains that "Because of my schedule, I rely on personal trainers to keep me fit" (1995i, p. 8). Included in Stewart's letter to readers are the details of how she exercises differently when she is at each of her homes, and how each home gym includes a variety of trainers and athletic equipment. In September 1998, Stewart proudly announces to viewers that then President Bill Clinton had visited her television studio and includes a picture of the two together (1998e, p. 16). In February 2004, Stewart shares with readers that she has been visiting the offices of Dr. Norman Orentreich (noted dermatologist and antiaging researcher) for almost twenty years...." (2004a, p. 6). Stewart's letter is also the place she chooses to share with readers that she has purchased yet another historical home: "Last summer I purchased a new house in Seal Harbor in Mount Desert Island.... It was built by Edsel B. Ford and Eleanor Clay Ford as a summer retreat for them and their four children" (1998a, p.16).

The regularity of these references to Stewart's present-day class position offers readers glimpses of Stewart's privilege, but the more detailed features on Stewart's homes and activities offer a more explicit picture of Stewart's wealth. Stewart's rose garden at her home in East Hampton, New York, is featured in *Living's* August 1994 issue. The eight-page article praises Stewart's garden as "the ultimate rose garden," and

includes lavish pictures of the more than seven hundred plants that comprise Stewart's then three-year-old garden (Roach, 1994, p. 47). The article details the laborious preparation of the garden's soil before planting, the nineteenth century *tuteur* whose shape inspired the trellis structures Stewart had custom made, the numerous steps in the regular regimen of care Stewart follows, and Stewart's favorites of the three hundred varieties she grows. The article describes Stewart's garden as "ambitious," but the images and descriptions of the garden position it as extraordinary, a garden so carefully created and spectacularly maintained that readers would be more likely to see such a garden on a tour of a public botanical garden than in their own backyards (Roach, 1994, p. 48).

The interior of Stewart's Westport, Connecticut home is the focus of a story in *Living's* September 1996 issue. Titled "Dream Kitchen," the article gives readers a tour of Stewart's recently renovated kitchen. The 350-square-foot room was taken "down to its framing and its dirt floors" for the remodel, a door was added, and a window was removed (Hamilton, W. B., 1996d, p. 130). For the remodel, Stewart selected "boca-white marble" for her counter- and table-tops, expensive restaurant quality appliances (two stoves, two dishwashers, and separate refrigerator and freezer units), and two floor-to-ceiling cupboards to house Stewart's massive collections (Hamilton, W. B., 1996d, p. 130). A previously unused study connected to the kitchen was remodeled as well, and photos display the new garden room, complete with a closet formatted to house Stewart's home office. The article does not reveal the remodel's timetable or budget, but it is clear from the many images of the project that it was quite an ambitious venture. Each of Stewart's many collections has its own place in the new kitchen: numerous copper pots hang from the ceiling of Stewart's four-by-eight-foot island; yellowware mixing bowls

are arranged above the refrigerator and freezer; silver is neatly organized in the cupboards' drawers; and stacks of fine china sit behind the clear glass doors of the cupboard. The quality and expense of the materials and objects used in the kitchen, paired with Stewart's suggestion that "It's good to build a little bit more than you think you need..." suggests that money was not a consideration for Stewart in this remodel (Hamilton, W. B., 1996d, p. 130).

A twelve-page feature on Turkey Hill in *Living's* September 1999 issue puts the whole house on display for readers. The article includes "then" and "now" pictures of the home's exterior, kitchen, mudroom, sun porch, library, north parlor, and dining room, each of which displays the changes made with Stewart's "redecorating" (Stewart, 1999d, p. 206), which included replacing the home's floor boards with "a double thickness of pumpkin pine" (Stewart, 1999d, p. 208). Each of the rooms is exquisitely decorated with antique furniture and Stewart's collections of Wedgwood drabware, Federal mirrors, Paris-porcelain baskets, and tableware.

Another of Stewart's homes, Skylands in Maine, is the feature of a similar story about decoration in September 2000. "All in the details," as its title suggests, allows readers to poke around Stewart's home, but focuses on a number of Stewart's decorative points of interest. Emphasized in the article is Stewart's use of mirrors for reflection, display of collections (glass jars, Pillivuyt plates and bowls, souvenir china, and wooden stools), and use of big gestures (oversized guest book and circular table) to make an impression. The lavish twelve-page spread, full of history, color, and textures, underscores that Stewart has redecorated the home in such a way that it would "still be nice enough" for Edsel and Eleanor Ford (Riegler, p. 259).

An eighty guest dinner party at Skylands is the focus of an article in *Living's* July 2001 issue. In numerous photos throughout the ten-page feature, readers can see staff preparing the event's meal and arranging the home's terrace with three long tables at which the guests will sit. The Spanish-inspired menu is extravagant, and the views of the Maine skyline from Stewart's home are spectacular. Images of the staff serving the guests at the tables, and the staff clearing the tables once the guests have left, demonstrate the magnitude of the event and the funding and coordination that made the dinner a success ("Skylands," 2001).

Stewart's rag-to-riches story is an extreme version of the American dream—few people could expect such a dramatic shift in class status over the course of their lives. Stewart's lifestyle, as demonstrated in her texts is, as Ann Mason and Marian Meyers (2001) suggest, "... one of wealth, luxury, and leisure—of immaculate homes, perfectly made beds, elegantly appointed furnishings, gorgeous landscaping, handmade gifts for the holidays, flawless dinner parties for twelve, and the time to patiently pursue complex projects or recipes" (p. 814). Stewart's story demonstrates that class is not necessarily something you are born with or marry into, it is learned and achieved. Thus Stewart's transformation constructs the illusion that such a transformation is within reach of Stewart's audience—if they carefully follow Stewart's instructions. As Margaret Talbot (1996) argues, Stewart's texts "are a dreamy advertisement for independent wealth—or, more accurately, for its facsimile. You may not have a posh pedigree, but with a little effort (okay, a lot) you can adopt its trappings. After all, Martha wasn't born into wealth either..." (p. 34).

Stewart's assertion that taste can be learned and class levels can be changed is ultimately democratic, allowing for the possibility that anyone could lead the life Stewart leads; as Meryl Gordon notes, Stewart holds out "the promise that anyone can achieve a patrician lifestyle, almost regardless of income" (1991, para. 7). But the depiction of Stewart's well-appointed world in her texts sets up an unattainable standard that encourages audience members to compare their lives to Stewart's, and as Cynthia Duquette Smith (2000) maintains, "such comparisons exert their own subtle pressures" (p. 355). As I discuss below, Stewart uses her magazines and television programs to teach her audience to raise their class status just as she did. The beautiful images of wealth, leisure and perfection in *Martha Stewart Living* are persuasive, and though the audience certainly has the power to resist the images, Stewart uses her teacherly voice to convince readers and viewers to follow her example by teaching them upper-class values and cultural expectations, and financial lessons designed to attain and maintain a luxurious lifestyle.

The monthly juxtaposition of Stewart's modest childhood in "Remembering" with images of Stewart's extravagant adulthood in the remainder of *Living* magazine's pages is repeated through all of Stewart's suggestions in *Living*. Though it is clear that Stewart's adult class position is her preferred one, lifestyle suggestions that would have been attractive and accessible to Stewart's childhood self are prominent in her texts, as well perhaps in part because Stewart's reminiscences are full of fondness for making do with what was available. Below I discuss Stewart's attempt to raise her audience's cultural capital, and explore the range of class and taste positions in *Martha Stewart Living* and determine which from the range are dominant.

Teaching the lesser classes

As aforementioned, one way that Stewart asserts her credibility as a teacher is to demonstrate the lessons she has learned as a student, and for Stewart, learning taste was no different than any other lesson. For example, in May 1998 Stewart described that her training in accumulating collectibles began as a child. She suggested that while shopping she was:

unconsciously ... developing my own personal taste—picking and choosing those things that appealed to me, that could have a lasting appeal, or would be the basis for some sort of collection.... I learned to like things that were not “hot” at the moment, and discovered that the best shoppers had an uncanny ability to recognize value and quality without fearing that something was not in style (1998d, p. 224).

Stewart learned to decorate through art history courses at Barnard and Columbia, through working full-time as a live-in maid and cook to two widowed sisters on New York City’s posh Fifth Avenue while she was in college (Tyrnauer, 2001, p. 401), and through observation of the design choices made by her mother-in-law (Stewart, 2001c, p.280). To learn more about historic decorating schemes for her Turkey Hill home, Stewart “did a lot of research—in books and on car trips to many famous restorations: at Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts; Winterthur in Delaware; Mount Vernon, Colonial Williamsburg, and Monticello in Virginia; and various Shaker communities” (Stewart, 2002e, p.312). Reflecting on the lessons she has learned over the years, Stewart shares with readers that “It has taken me a long time to feel confident that I do, indeed, have my own personal style of decorating.... But now that I feel comfortable with the process, I, like many of you, am addicted to decorating. It can be time-consuming, but if treated as a passion, instead of as a chore, decorating can indeed be a most delightful part of living” (Stewart, 2000b, p.22).

In “The Forms of Capital,” Pierre Bourdieu (1997) argues that cultural capital “cannot be transmitted instantaneously ... by gift or bequest, purchase or exchange,” and much like muscle building or suntanning, cannot be acquired “second hand” (p. 48). Instead, cultural capital can be attained through “work on oneself (self-improvement), an effort that presupposes a personal cost ... an investment, above all of time, but also of that socially constituted form of libido, *libido sciendi* [lust for knowledge], with all the privation, renunciation, and sacrifice that it may entail” (p. 48). As I have already demonstrated, Stewart describes the process through which she acquired cultural capital as a process of learning to which she was totally devoted. Stewart’s faithful investment of time, and desire to learn, helped her acquire the cultural capital she regularly displays in *Living*. Her achievements make Stewart an appropriate teacher for those interested in similarly accumulating cultural capital.

True to Stewart’s self-identification as a teacher, many of the displays of wealth and grandeur in Stewart’s texts are framed as lessons for her audiences. Amy Bentley (2001) noted this characteristic in Stewart’s texts about food; Bentley asserts that Stewart’s tone suggests that she “feels the need to educate the upwardly-aspiring in the proper mode of production and presentation....” (p. 93). Media scholar Linda Robertson argues that Stewart is “teaching people who have a desire to emulate or to enter a particular class, not people who are already confident of their status in that class” (qtd. in Fox, 1998, p. B7). Michael J. Golec (2006) similarly believes that Stewart’s presentation of upper class life suggests to her audiences that such a life is “just within reach” (p. 12).

Cultural “lessons” abound in *Martha Stewart Living*, from cooking to entertaining and decorating to gardening. While many of these topics are treated generally, either as a

display of Stewart's interests or as a subject that could interest a range of audience members, many subjects are framed in such a way as to specifically raise audience members' cultural capital, and help them increase their social capital by teaching them what they should know or how they should act—what others with a higher class status will expect of them.

Focusing on areas in which one's cultural knowledge will be on display in front of others, many articles strive to teach the "proper" way to do something, with a focus on entertaining. For example, an October/November 1993 article, "Setting the table," warns that although "knowing which fork to use isn't a required skill ... setting a proper table still matters" (Schrager, 1993, p. 30). The article offers a glossary of a complete place setting of silver and draws from Miss Manners to give tips for using service plates and salt cellars. The article encourages readers to display their collections on their dinner table by offering Stewart's example: "For Martha, a dinner party is a chance to display all the things she's found at flea markets and antiques stores—Edwardian oyster forks, pearl-handled salad knives, colored goblets" (Schrager, 1993, p. 32).

Years later, on a *Martha Stewart Living* episode (airdate November 13, 2002), Stewart sets a table for her viewers that does indeed show off her collections of Wedgwood drabware, and depression glass. In demonstrating how she sets a dinner table for twelve, Stewart reiterates many of the same lessons about service plates and salt cellars, and adds tips for tablecloths, folding napkins, using potted plants on the table instead of fresh flowers, and hand-making place cards (Krzyzanowski, 2002z).

Martha Stewart Living's article on caviar counsels readers on nine different varieties and offers serving suggestions for a New Year's Eve party, offering that

“Everyone has a need for a little decadence occasionally, and caviar fills it better than anything else” (Adler, 1994, p. 107). The article warns, however, that “a mistake in buying caviar can be one you will regret for a long time. Beluga costs around \$50 an ounce, and an ounce is barely a serving, especially if you allow guests to serve themselves” (Adler, 1994, p. 110). To help readers select the caviar that will best suit their needs, the article includes a pictorial glossary and lengthy descriptions of each variety. *Living*’s June/July 1994 article, “Choosing music” offers similar guidelines for readers planning an event: “We all face the same decision when we entertain at home. ... To play or not to play, what to play?” (Hamilton, B., 1994, p. 40). The article maintains that it is best to carefully plan musical selections before the event to avoid wasting “time correcting the music during the evening itself.” (Hamilton, B., 1994, p. 40). To aid in this preparation, the article includes a list of music appropriate for cocktails, dinner, after dinner/late evening, and instructions for hiring musicians.

While many of Stewart’s teachings for audience members aspiring to her privileged lifestyle focus on suggestions that will be observed by or will impact others, many teachings focus on private decisions, the results of which may or may not be noticeable to others. The bulk of these teachings involve economic capital, or more specifically, financial decision-making. As with Stewart’s lessons about entertaining, her financial lessons are constructed for those with new-found wealth or for those curious about whether they can live like Stewart. These lessons would be of little interest to those accustomed to lifestyles like Stewart’s because they would almost certainly be familiar with wealth management or have a staff of employees who handle such matters.

For instance, *Living's* article on hiring a housekeeper is titled, "How to find and treat the person who cleans your home" ("Contents," 1994b, p. 12). The article argues that in the last "ten to fifteen years" hiring household help has become more common outside of the most wealthy classes and suggests that the trend "has put women ... in the position of being not just managers of their homes, but managers of a household staff, however small or sporadic" (Hartocollis, 1994, p. 64). To soothe the potential embarrassment of the reader, the article emphasizes that "Even the most savvy executive can find hiring a housekeeper ... a baffling, forbidding prospect" (Hartocollis, 1994, p. 64). Following the experience of one professional woman, the article covers interviewing, titles ("maid" has fallen out of favor"), and cites housekeepers' experiences, likes and dislikes (Hartocollis, 1994, p. 66). Additional topics include pay, tipping, vacation time, legal issues, terminating the relationship, and the tasks expected on weekly, monthly and yearly bases.

Martha Stewart Living's July 20, 2004 episode offered similarly detailed instructions for purchasing a diamond engagement ring. For the segment, Stewart visited Tiffany & Co., which she describes as "the crown jewel of the diamond world" and "an authority on the subject of selecting and purchasing diamond engagement rings for over one hundred and sixty years" (Krzyzanowski, 2004f). Stewart visits with Melvyn Kirtley, vice president and general manager of Tiffany's, who works to help viewers through a "confusing and intimidating" process by explaining the four factors that impact a diamond's price: cut, clarity, carat weight, and color (Krzyzanowski, 2004f). In addition, Kirtley discusses diamond settings and shows many rings to Stewart. At the end of the ten minute segment, Stewart encourages viewers to consider Tiffany's as the store from

which they would purchase an engagement ring, in part because the classic Tiffany's packaging "speaks volumes to the bride-to-be" (Krzyzanowski, 2004f).

Martha Stewart Living covers another sign of wealth in the October 1996 article, "Can you afford a second home?" The article suggests "most second home buyers aren't rich," and offers statistics that indicate that since 1990, the number of Americans who own a second home has increased dramatically (Schatz, 2002, p. 104). The experience of single-mother Terri Grauel (who lives in a rental in New York City) is featured to assert to readers that "What sets [second home owners] apart is their decision to make a priority of owning a vacation spot" (Schatz, 2002, p. 104). The two-page article includes advice from financial advisors and emphasizes the pros and cons of owning a second home. Though the article encourages the reader to think through the cons carefully, the suggestion that a second home may be within reach is advanced throughout the article. Additional financial lessons in *Living* magazine include managing credit card debt (Finch, 1996), buying a car (McEwen, 1997), finding a financial planner (Coplan, 2002a), financing a home improvement (Garskof, 2001), and writing a will (Coplan, 2002b).

In sum, in *Living*, Stewart demonstrates that her desire to accumulate cultural capital, beginning in childhood, was an ambitious project that required an abundance of time and the desire to learn—exactly what Bourdieu suggests is necessary. Positioned firmly on the elite class position she has attained, Stewart uses *Living* to teach readers and viewers to acquire cultural and social capital by meeting public expectations and making informed private decisions. As I demonstrate in the following section, Stewart also encourages her audience to fantasize about living a life of luxury.

Luxury and Fantasy

In line with Stewart's class status in adulthood, many of Stewart's lifestyle suggestions project images of and ideas about luxury, despite the fact that many in her audience cannot afford a number of the suggestions she makes. As stated in MSLO promotional materials for advertisers, in 2003, the average reader of *Martha Stewart Living* had a household income of \$66,835, 68% had attended or graduated from college, 77% owned their "principal residence," and 63% lived in a home with a value greater than \$100,000. Visitors to marthastewart.com had a household income of \$75,629, 80% were "college educated," and 76% owned their residence. Fewer figures were provided for *Martha Stewart Living* weekday television viewers, who had a lower household income (\$41,864); only 46% percent had attended or graduated from college.¹⁵ Stewart, on the other hand, received a \$1.4 million salary in 2003 ("Martha Stewart's," 2004, p. 60). Though Stewart claims to have lost \$400 million of her personal fortune through the ImClone scandal, her personal worth in 2003 was \$650 million (Doran, 2003, p. 25).

Despite Stewart's clear knowledge about her audience members' financial situations, she assumes, as reflected in MSLO's (n.d.) mission statement, that those in her audience, much like Martha Kostyra from Nutley, New Jersey, wish to raise their class status: "Martha Stewart Living provides consumers with the information, ideas, and confidence they need to raise the quality of living and lifestyle in their homes and in a wide variety of activities that form the core of homelife." Similarly, Stewart told *Working Woman*'s Meryl Gordon (1991), "The reason for my work ... is to help people enhance their everyday lives" (para. 1). Thus, projecting images and ideas based on luxury are

part of Stewart's mission to fulfill her audience's presumed desire to increase their cultural capital.

In February 1999, *Living's* Editor-in-Chief Stephen Drucker told readers that: "The whole idea of this magazine is that everything should be the best it can possibly be" (p.28). In keeping with this idea, Stewart's texts contain messages about luxurious homes, designs and vacations. The best bathroom designs are displayed in "Private spaces" in *Living's* February/March 1993 issue. Most of the article's ten pages are filled with images of spacious bathrooms with marble and intricately tiled surfaces (Barbour, 1993a, pp. 74-83). Unusual antique fixtures, plush linens, and expensive toiletries fill each bathroom. In total, the article suggests that a bathroom should be well-appointed, beautiful and welcoming: "a place to spend a private hour leisurely soaking away the traces of a long, hard day" (Barbour, 1999, p. 82). In Stewart's texts, having such a bathroom in one's home becomes not just the reward at the end of a long day, but also the reason to work a long hard day in the first place: to acquire the economic capital necessary to afford such luxury.

Living's November 1994 article on "Outfitting a guest room" offers readers advice about another room in their homes, maintaining that a guest room should have "all the comforts of a small luxury hotel" ("Contents," p. 12). The article gives astonishingly detailed descriptions of the necessities of the room, including its location (away from children's rooms and the busiest parts of the house with a bathroom attached), its furniture (an armchair or settee with a pillow or throw, and a desk or table), and its accessories (six pillows, pressed and starched sheets, two blankets and a throw, a hot water bottle, a rug on each side of the bed, a night light, light-blocking window

treatments, and an adjustable brightness lamp). The room should also include a “small personal library” of reading materials, magazines, the daily newspaper, and all a guest would need for letter writing: pen, paper, note cards, envelopes, postcards and stamps (Hamilton, W. B., 1994b, pp. 42-44). The bathroom should be stocked with new toothbrushes and toothpaste, cotton bath towels (two body, two face, and one washcloth), a natural sponge, and a robe for each guest. The article stresses that “a good guest room provides for all a guest’s purposes: a place to sleep, read, write, do some work, or relax, dress, and bathe” (Hamilton, W. B., 1994b, p. 42). To insure that the room will graciously meet a guest’s needs, the article advises that the host should stay in the room prior to a guest’s visit.

Focusing on luxury in the kitchen, “The pros and cons of commercial stoves,” aims to help readers decide if they should add a commercial stove to their kitchen while remodeling (Hamilton, W. B., 1995a). Stoves by Garland, Wolf, Castle, and Vulcan (each of which can cost \$15,000-40,000 and more), are mentioned in the article, which explains that they have “gained an almost mythic reputation for being better stoves” (Hamilton, W. B., 1995a, p. 50). Although the cons are substantial (stoves can weigh up to one thousand pounds, and are not child-proof or insulated), the article never mentions price and suggests only that “Ultimately, the decision to buy a commercial or commercial-style range rests on the performance you require” (Hamilton, W. B., 1995a, p. 52).

Affordability is never a question in the article.

Luxury also figures prominently in design elements. The history of monogramming is traced in *Living’s* April 1998 issue, which teaches that: “It wasn’t until the nineteenth century, when a well-stocked linen closet became the ultimate sign of

prosperity, that the bourgeoisie embraced the idea, replacing royal symbols with their own initials” (Conway, p. 172). Monograms, which the article stresses “exist to be admired,” become extravagant adornments in pictures of a blanket, curtain, pillowcases, bedroom slippers, and a chair’s slipcover (Conway, pp. 172-177). Instructions for monogramming encourage readers to design their own monograms and “have a seamstress or professional embroidery shop take care of the rest” (Conway, p. 175).

Ruffles are treated similarly in *Living*’s April 2001 issue, though they have an older pedigree: “Ruffles, which require excess lengths of cloth, first showed up on aristocratic dress in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries” (Coffee, p. 208). Examples of “these lavish displays of costly fabrics [that] have signified wealth throughout history” adorn the article’s eight pages in tablecloths, a throw, placemats, ornamentation on a cake, a bedspread, and window shades (Coffee, 2001, p. 208). Though the article contains fewer directions for making ruffles than the article on monograms, it maintains that “it is really the details that people remember. Ruffles, one such detail, can be flights of fancy that elevate the prose of the essentials to something lyrical and personal” (Coffee, 2001, p. 208).

A full range of design elements is highlighted in a segment on wedding dresses on *Martha Stewart Living* (Krzyzanowski, 2002o). In the seven-minute segment, Stewart visits the New York studio of Michelle Roth Bridal Salon in New York City to discuss wedding dress details “that make the day” (Krzyzanowski, 2002o). Roth, who carries the fashions of between ten and fifteen European and American designers, discusses a number of dresses with Stewart and explains that the pattern for each dress is made individually for each bride from the twenty-five measurements Roth takes. Beading is

one of the noted details on the dresses; one dress is “encrusted with Swarovski crystals” and another has beaded straps so intricate that they take five days for experienced Italian seamstresses to make (Krzyzanowski, 2002o). The gown that Roth called “the quintessential fantasy gown” is so covered with beads that it takes six months to make the bodice alone (Krzyzanowski, 2002o). Each of the gowns is complemented with ornate diamond necklaces and earrings that Stewart boasts were loaned for the episode by Fred Leighton (famous for loaning incredibly expensive pieces of jewelry to celebrities for public occasions).¹⁶

Vacations are another vehicle through which Stewart’s texts promote expensive and extravagant lifestyles—it should be no surprise that they include “social sports.” *Living*’s October/November 1993 article on “Sailboat charters” emphasizes the pleasure of going to sea with “a captain, a cook, and an itinerary that you control” (“Contents,” 1993, p. 14). Suggested charters include the Bahamas, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, Tahiti, Hawaii, The Pacific Northwest, and New England. Though the article stresses that there are several boat charters to choose from at different costs, the detailed instructions and the list of charter brokers included in the article suggest that the vacation choice is an uncommon and exclusive destination (Marsano, 1993).

“Ski retreat,” in *Living*’s March 1995 issue, features a quick weekend getaway trip in the mountains north of Lake Tahoe. The Tompkins family and their guests, twelve people in total, spent the weekend at the Tompkins’ vacation home, which the article describes as “the perfect place to steal away with friends and family, far from impatient clocks and everyday cares” (Barbour, 1995a, p. 73). While the focus of the article is the extravagant meal made for Saturday night dinner, it does discuss the benefits of owning a

vacation home near a ski resort: “One of the great luxuries of a place like this is that you don’t have to ski all day long to justify the expense or effort. The mountain is always just a few steps away, and season lift passes hang by the door” (Barbour, 1995a, p. 74). Of course, the tradeoff for having the freedom to ski at one’s leisure is the expense of owning a second home.

The focus of *Living*’s May 1995 issue, “Golf camp for women,” is less on luxury than it is on aspiration. The author attends a five-day program in Pinehurst, North Carolina to learn “to play a man’s game at a school for women only” (“Contents,” 1995, p. 14). The article highlights that only two million Americans take up golf each year and that women comprise 37% of new players (Penney, 1995, p. 50). What is most relevant about the article is the reasons why women would attend a camp to learn to play the game: “for exercise, for camaraderie, for the personal challenge. And, increasingly, because it’s good for business” (Penney, 1995, p. 52). The article positions golf as a necessity for women rising in the ranks of American businesses. As one woman told the author, “I need to golf with my clients, not shop with their wives” (Penney, 1995, p. 52). Thus, while one would need a luxury of time and money to attend such a camp (the five-day camp costs \$1,095), what is striking about the article is that the importance of golf to men of a particular class has necessitated that women now enjoying professional success once available only to men learn to play the game to further their careers (Penney, 1995, p. 55).

In total, *Living*’s portrayal of a life of luxury contributes to what Juliet Schor (2003) calls “upscale emulation,” a process by which the media’s glamorization of the accoutrements of affluent lifestyles “inflate the viewer’s perceptions of what others have,

and by extension what is worth acquiring” (pp. 185-186). Schor maintains that while such comparisons and emulation are not new, the fact that these comparisons “are less likely to take place between or among households of similar means” has changed since the 1970s, essentially the period of time when Stewart began writing books about entertaining (p. 185). The end result of upscale emulation is that “the lifestyles of the upper middle class and the rich have become a more salient point of reference for people through the income distribution. Luxury, rather than mere comfort, is a widespread aspiration” (p. 185).

In Stewart’s world, the presentation of a life of wealth and extravagance becomes a class fantasy, or what British magazine founder Tyler Brule calls “homemaker porn,” the construction of a fantastical world “you can’t have” (qtd. in “A Picture-Perfect,” 2000, p. 72). Stewart’s text, then, offers the chance to participate in an upper class lifestyle through exposure to *Martha Stewart Living*. As Cynthia Duquette Smith (2000) argues, “Even if MSLO’s audience finds that their lives have little in common with Stewart’s, many see the world created by her publications and television program as an opportunity for vicarious escape” (p. 354).

Time, Space and Money

Part of the appeal of Stewart’s extravagant representations of upper class life is the sense of ease, tranquility and simplicity they convey. As Verena Hess (2001) contends, Stewart’s “tone makes domestic activities appealing as aesthetic, useful, and creative endeavors that can be easy and simple” (p. 10). The tranquility and simplicity disappear, however, when Stewart’s representations become suggestions; the ease of Stewart’s world is shown to be achievable only through strenuous effort, often involving a staff, and an incredible investment in time, money, and space. When Stewart provides

directions for replicating her lifestyle, she creates an opening through which audience members can see just how different their lives are from Stewart's. Looking through this opening, *Business Week* (2000) asserts that Stewart's "name has become synonymous with a kind of unattainable—and slightly ridiculous—standard in the domestic arts, thanks to projects designed to take hours, if not days to complete" ("A Picture-Perfect," p. 72). *The New Republic's* Margaret Talbot (1996) insists that Stewart's message "is about more than just money ... it's about time, and the luxurious plentitude of it" (p. 34). Scholar Amy Bentley (2001) argues that Stewart's "projects (and recipes) are quite complex, require a fair amount of money, and can be wasteful of resources" (p. 96).

Editor-in-Chief Stephen Drucker makes no apologies for the grandeur of some of *Living's* suggestions. In his March 1998 "Editor's Letter" he explains to readers that:

All in all, we're a practical group here at Martha Stewart Living, interested in simple ideas and the everyday business of homekeeping. But we wouldn't be satisfied sending any issue of our magazine to you unless it included a few ideas that bend logic a bit, in the hope of taking you someplace new.... It's a constant search here at the magazine to create ideas that are a little more dramatic, a little more sparkling, a little more colorful than most of us would try on our own. We like the big gesture, the layer cake with an extra layer, the bouquet that's truly an armful, the basket or bowl that's so large, it's an event in itself.... This spring there will be no stopping me. Logic is not going to talk me out of this pleasure. Don't let it hold you back either (p. 26).

Drucker's explanation for *Living's* inclusion of "big gestures" is not necessarily troubling, but his description of what constitutes such a gesture in Stewart's texts is understated. What constitutes "big" in *Martha Stewart Living* usually involves substantial investments in materials, time and labor, and a significant amount of work and storage space. For example, suggestions for holidays and collecting are two of the main areas where Stewart's "big gestures" stand out. In February 2002, *Living* suggested celebrating Valentine's Day by quilling valentines. Quilling, also called paper filigree, is introduced

as “the art of creating intricate shapes from strips of paper.... After a long, narrow ribbon of paper is rolled around a needlelike tool, the strip is slipped off, arranged with your fingertips into the desired shape, and then glued to a background of contrasting paper, fabric or wood” (Lyttle, 2002, p. 143). The article states that quilling enjoyed widespread popularity in the nineteenth century, when middle- and upper-class women enjoyed crafting with paper. While the materials required for the projects are minimal, and several of the projects seem fairly easy, as the eight-page article continues, the projects become increasingly difficult: from cards with quilled words like “Be Mine” or “To my love” to a bouquet of tiny roses, intricately adorned cards, and gift boxes covered in quilled tiny roses. The final two pages offer readers the opportunity to reproduce the items in the article with step-by-step pictorial instructions and tips on techniques.

Stewart’s Mother’s Day luncheon for her mother is featured in *Living’s* April/May 1993 issue. The table is beautifully decorated, the guests are well-dressed, and the menu is elaborate: consommé with herb dumplings, navarin of lamb with spring vegetables, mashed potatoes with sorrel, and a pansy layer cake. A six-page article documents the celebration (Barbour, 1993b, pp. 92-97), and a five-page article describes how to replicate the menu (Barbour, 1993b, pp. 118-128). While the photos of Stewart’s family enjoying the meal display the pleasure it brought the guests, the instructions for the menu’s components reveal just how much effort went into the luncheon: the consommé needs to be cooked twice, the French stew that accompanied the lamb needed to be prepared in advance and refrigerated overnight, and the layer cake (actually shaped and decorated to look like a pansy) must be prepared over a three day period. Replicating this meal would be no small undertaking.

Collecting. A large part of Stewart's teachings about the accumulation of cultural capital revolves around the purchase and display of tasteful objects. However, *Living's* discussion of the purchase and display of these objects, like the lifestyle suggestions discussed above, disregards monetary and spatial considerations. In "The Forms of Capital," Bourdieu (1997) argues that "The cultural capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc., is transmissible in its materiality" (p. 50). In this way, "cultural goods can be appropriated both materially—which presupposes economic capital—and symbolically—which presupposes cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 50). *Martha Stewart Living* suggests that cultural capital can be increased by learning which objects symbolize elite taste.

"Collecting" has been a regular column in *Living* magazine since its third issue. What is interesting about the column—and Stewart's desire to teach her audience members what to collect and how—is that, while some of the items Stewart encourages her audience to collect are rare, costly and handmade, many are relatively inexpensive and mass-produced. In fact, while Stewart's texts highlight exclusive antique shows like New York City's Fall Antique Show on Park Avenue (Krzyzanowski, 2002p), or how to tell American antiques from English ones (Krzyzanowski, 2002l), they are just as likely to feature flea markets (Evans, 1991; Barbour, 1993c) and tag sales (Hamilton, W. B., 1995b). While *Living's* inclusion of inexpensive and mass-produced items suggests that Stewart's elite tastes are made more egalitarian through the suggestion that tasteful items are not necessarily originals (see Benjamin, 1978), the lessons in *Living* stress which items have collectible value and which do not.¹⁷

Tableware is one of the most frequent collectibles in Stewart's texts. Hotel silver (Wright, 1993), pewter (Charlé, 1997), designer barware (Isle, 2002), and nineteenth-century transfer ware (Berman, 1995) might be anticipated items given *Living's* taste level, while Pyrex (Trucco, 1998b), souvenir spoons (Kearney, 2001) and coasters (Isle, 2000) may be less expected. Many features on collectibles describe items as originally having little value; it is their historical value and their rarity that make them special. For example, a July/August 1996 article on "refrigeratorware" stated that "In the thirties, pressed-glass refrigeratorware was often given away free with the purchase of a fridge; today, collectors can pay as much as \$50 for a piece" (Schrager, 1996, p. 66). The three-page article classifies the items according to color, make, and shape, and offers readers tips for identification and fair pricing.

Milk glass is treated similarly in a July/August 1998 article: "Milk glass originally addressed the desire of an expanding middle class for the finer things in life. It was porcelain for the masses, an inexpensive substitute for luxurious tableware and accessories made by such companies as Wedgwood and Spode, whose designs it imitated shamelessly" (Read, 1998, p. 116). The six-page article offers a history of milk glass, which dates back to 1500 B. C., and offers tips and advice from collectors, including *Living's* style editor Fritz Karch.

Even wastepaper baskets are collectible in Stewart's texts, despite the fact that "most were not made with aesthetics in mind" (Brink, 1999, p. 132). A four-page article offers the beginning collector information about the types of wastepaper baskets to look for (metal, birch-bark, plastic, wastecraft, institutional, and wicker), and clues to a

basket's age. Readers with collections of wastepaper baskets are encouraged to "stop hiding them under the desk" ("Contents," 1999, p. 30).

Stewart describes herself as a collector, and examples of her collections are regularly featured in *Living's* articles and segments. However, Stewart's own example demonstrates one of the major demands of collections: space. In May 1995, Stewart shares that she often gets very attached to the items she collects and suggests that "That is probably why I have too many houses and too much stuff" (1995e, p. 128). Stewart's confession reveals her excessive connection to materials goods, enabled only by the wealth she has accumulated; Stewart's "too many houses" serve as the locations in which she can store her collections, and seem to have become items for Stewart to collect as well.

In Stewart's texts, ideas for collecting often lead to ideas about how to store collections. An eight-page article in *Living's* Spring 1991 issue examines Alexis Stewart's techniques (namely, shelves) for storing her collections of glassware and ceramics ("Collector's Cottage"). A "Good Thing" offers details for creating a picture shelf, "a clean, elegant way to display a lot of art without making your wall look like a scrapbook" ("Good Things," 1995b, p.36). *Living's* May 1996 issue includes two separate articles on storing collections: one on collecting vintage brackets that could be used with shelves to hold other collectibles (Hamilton, W. B., p. 74-78), and another heralding shelves because they "can house vast amounts of a variety of stuff ... while making it all look like it's on loan from the local museum" (Hamilton, W. B., p. 94). An October 1997 article features examples of shadow boxes hung to display collections of

small items (Tung, 1997), still other articles offer tips for displaying handkerchiefs (“Find of,” 1999b, p.60) and storing treasured napkins (“askMartha,” 1999, p.54).

Thus, *Martha Stewart Living*, in its attempt to both represent a life of good taste and teach audience members how to achieve it, reveals the enormous amounts of money, time, and space necessary to achieve it. In the process, as *Time* magazine (1996) emphasizes, the overwhelmingly detailed directions for accomplishing Stewart’s lifestyle make the tasks more a fantasy than a reality for people outside of Stewart’s class level: “The real secret to Martha is that the perfection she is pursuing is so out of reach of anyone without a staff, or who sleeps more than Martha’s four hours a night, that there is no obligation to actually do it” (“Martha Stewart,” para. 3). Smith (2000) argues similarly that “No matter what one’s life situation, Stewart’s discourse allows you to imagine yourself doing the things she does, even if you have no intention of lifting a creative finger” (p. 354).

For those who have the resources to undertake Stewart’s suggestions, the completed projects become a form of cultural capital, demonstrating to others that one has the time, skill and money to emulate Stewart’s tasteful lifestyle. As Bentley (2001) argues, “Being able to emulate Martha Stewart for any more than an occasional recipe signifies one’s status, anticipated or real” (p. 93). Finished projects and collections that can be displayed become conspicuous symbols of wealth and taste. While many of Stewart’s suggestions and projects are designed specifically to demonstrate an audience member’s assimilation into upscale ideas about taste and class, not all of Stewart’s ideas require large investments of money, time and space.

Modest, Do-it-yourself, and New-from-old Projects

“Good Things,” as defined by Editor-in-Chief Stephen Drucker, are for readers who are “really short on time,” who would like to make their lives “more organized, more fun, more efficient, more beautiful, or more delicious, and ... do so more affordably...” (1998c, p.26). While many “Good Things” do not live up to Drucker’s suggestion that they require little time or money, at least as many do. For example, “Good Things” in *Living* magazine that require little to no effort include: placing a teaspoon over the opening of a teapot to hold teabags while they steep (2001a), lining a paint pan with foil so you only have to toss out the foil when finished painting (2004a), and labeling electronics boxes with warranty expiration dates so you know when you should throw them away (2002b). “Good Things” additionally include: hanging a fresh branch of eucalyptus in the shower to help with sinus congestion (1995a), using a scented bar of soap as a sachet in a dresser drawer (2002a), using a bamboo steamer as a storage container for garlic, shallots, and onions (2004c), and drilling a hole in a bar of soap to hang it on a rope for use in an outdoor shower (2001b). “Good Things” appear on Stewart’s television program as well; on the October 8, 2002 episode of *From Martha’s Home*, Stewart shows viewers how to label and decorate a number of inexpensive plastic photo holders to organize a photo collection (Krzyzanowski, 2002i). On an episode of *From Martha’s Kitchen*, Stewart demonstrates how viewers can revive a wedge of dried out parmesan cheese by wrapping it in a damp piece of cheesecloth (Krzyzanowski, 2002j). On an episode of *Martha Stewart Living*, Stewart explains how viewers can add an anti-tarnish strip to their storage for sterling silver serving pieces to reduce the frequency with which they might need to polish their silver (Krzyzanowski, 2002u).

Other suggestions in Stewart's texts encourage audience members to invest their time in projects that could save them money. For example, *Living's* February 1996 article on plumbing repairs emphasizes that during a plumbing emergency, "you can call a plumber, who will dutifully charge you for your complete lack of comprehension, especially in a state of siege. Or you can learn enough about the water pipes, shut-off valves, and fixtures common to any apartment or house to contend confidently with the problems and repairs" (Hamilton, W. B., p. 52). The article makes suggestions for necessary tools to have around the house and offers tips for repairing a drip, removing a clog, and fixing a running toilet.

A September 1998 article in *Martha Stewart Living* gives readers advice for an at-home child's haircut. A number of reasons are listed for why giving a haircut at home would be advantageous, including "You can save quite a bit of time and money" (Conway, p. 190). The four-page article offers tips for a baby's first haircut, trimming bangs, cutting curly or long hair, and a boy's trim. Only four inexpensive tools are recommended.

In a television segment on dividing perennials on the October 7, 2002 episode of *Martha Stewart Living*, Stewart demonstrates her techniques in her Turkey Hill garden. As she discusses division of a Siberian iris, she offers that the retail price for the divided sections of the iris would be about eight dollars from a perennial grower. She emphasizes the value of her actions when she suggests that after her division of her oversized bed of iris, she will have "quite a fortune of lovely Siberian iris in a very short time" (Krzyzanowski, 2002g). At the end of the segment, Stewart underscores the significance

of dividing one's perennials when she says, "Spread the wealth, your friends will welcome a gift of perennials that you've divided" (Krzyzanowski, 2002g).

Some of Stewart's ideas offer more than monetary rewards for undertaking relatively simple tasks; some projects promise readers and viewers increased self-sufficiency and confidence. An April 1998 *Living* article on bike tune-ups suggests that "The feeling of independence and control you get from pedaling the bike, steering it, and learning with it needn't stop as soon as anything goes wrong. You can learn to do standard maintenance yourself" (Peake, 1998b, p. 130). The article suggests a few necessary tools (e.g., pump, patch kit, Allen wrenches) and gives readers step-by-step directions for adjusting the seat, repairing a flat tire, and adjusting the brakes.

"Simple Sewing Repairs," in *Living*'s May 2000 issue, declares that "with a tidy collection of the proper tools, knowledge of the basic stitches, and a little patience, you may be surprised by what you can gain besides clothing fit to wear again" (Block, 2000, p. 112). Citing a survey by the Home Sewing association, the article emphasizes that "people who sew feel more energetic, creative, and optimistic than people who don't" (Block, 2000, p. 112). The four-page story includes tips for fixing a pulled hem, fixing a ripped seam, and patching a hole. Suggested tools include scissors, thread, pins, needles, a ruler, and a marking pencil.

Stewart's texts also emphasize making new from old, or refurbishing an item rather than replacing it with something new. In fact, Stewart seems to scorn new items, preferring they look antique or vintage. For example, she writes about her 1999 redecoration of Turkey Hill that, "I try never to throw away pieces, but rather make them look new—though not brand new—with the best possible fabric" (1999e, p.208). In a

“Remembering” column about the redecoration of Skylands in Maine, Stewart remarks that “One of the most wonderful things about the house was that whatever had been removed from use was lovingly hidden away, and not only in the attic or basement—new old bathroom tiles were discovered in a hole in the stable floor, parts to the kitchen drain boards were in a cellar, hardware was found in the workshop drawers” (1999d, p.296). Finding new purposes for old items is a key component of Stewart’s messages.

An article in *Living*’s August 2001 issue, “From this to that” celebrates the ways in which “old items find new uses throughout the house” (“Contents,” p. 16). The article’s ten pages proudly display the transformations of a chenille bedspread into a curtain, a tablecloth into an ottoman slipcover, a window into a cabinet, a utility table into a sink stand, men’s suits into a quilt, neckties into a pillow sham, a mantel into a headboard, a hospital trolley into a laundry center, a doll bed into a cat bed, and old drawers into under-bed storage. The article adds that while some of the suggestions on the pages may have not easily come to mind, “Martha, a magician at recycling old things, believes that this ability [to transform old items into new] can be acquired” (Gordon, A., 2001a, p. 145).

Living’s October 2001 article, “Make-dos and whimsies,” highlights damaged items “repaired with inventiveness and wit” (Hine, 2001a, p. 190). The article defines a “make-do” as a damaged household item whose owner decided “to pick up the pieces and reuse them.” Though each item is damaged to the point that it cannot become again what it once was, the article stresses that the reworked items “acquire an idiosyncratic charm all [their] own” (Hine, 2001a, p. 193). When the item can no longer be used for its original purpose, “a fanciful twist of resourcefulness transforms it into something wholly

different.... That's when a make-do is also a whimsy" (Hine, 2001a, p. 193). The eight-page article displays a number of make-dos and whimsies, including a ceramic platter, teapot, and teacup and saucer repaired with thick metal staples, glass vases and stemware repaired with metal bases, and ceramic pitchers with metal and wicker handles.

Ideas for reworking old items abound on Stewart's television programs with segments that include repairing damaged pottery (Krzyzanowski, 2002r), making throw pillows from vintage blankets (Krzyzanowski, 2002bb), and reweaving the leather seat of a chair (Krzyzanowski, 2002g). Further, Stewart's preference for the old over the new is made clear through program segments that teach viewers to "age" new cement planters (Krzyzanowski, 2002d) and to paint new drinking glasses to make them look vintage (Krzyzanowski, 2003c).

Ideas for refurbishing old items are also staples of *Living* magazine, which has featured suggestions for refurbishing vintage metal office furniture (pieces of which are pictured in Stewart's office in her television studio) (Peake, 1999b); using old-fashioned glass jelly jars for vases, candle holders, drinking glasses, and snack containers (Wong, 2004); and reworking vintage tablecloths, napkins, and dishtowels from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s into curtains, seat cushions, lampshades, tote bags, throw pillows and bed covers (Gerston, 2004). In fact, this type of project is so common to *Living* magazine that a regular column, "Find of the Month," was added in March 1999 to show "a do-it-yourself miracle that breathes new vitality into yard-sale castaways, flea-market misfits, or attic orphans" (Brenner, 2001, p.24). The column's first entry includes suggestions for turning wire horse-feed baskets into hanging planters ("Find of," 1999a, p.76). Subsequent columns contain ideas for turning vintage aluminum baking pans and molds

into sconces (“Find of,” 1999c, p.82), refashioning antique ironstone washbasins into hanging birdbaths (“Find of,” 2000, p.72), and using antique hooks for curtain tiebacks (“Find of,” 2002, p.49).

Similar to giving old items new lives is keeping aging items in good condition. Preservation and restoration are common themes in all of Stewart’s texts and “Restoring” has been a regular column in *Martha Stewart Living* magazine since its first issue. *Living*’s October 1999 article “How do you store it?” is a representative example. The article begins with the proclamation that “most of us own more than we need, or have room for” (Williams, 1999, p. 144). Rather than give away those things that one does not need, the article suggests that “there’s no better way to give thanks for this abundance than to preserve precious things carefully so that one day they can be used again or passed on to a friend or family member” (Williams, 1999, p. 144). Directions for preparing a storage site (a basement, attic, or garage), and detailed instructions for storing furniture, rugs and carpets, linens and curtains, mirrors and art, quilts, artifact boxes, and suitcases are discussed. The article also includes tips for deterring pests, avoiding odors, and using desiccants. The value of preservation is underscored when the article stresses “It’s worth every minute of your time to pack your valued items well” (Williams, 1999, p. 144). A similar feature on properly packing china and glass, was the focus of an “Ask Martha” segment on *From Martha’s Home* (Krzyzanowski, 2002i). In “Preserving a family history,” *Martha Stewart Living*’s design director, Barbara de Wilde, displays the steps she took to preserve and restore her family’s treasures, discovered after the death of her aunt. The eight-page article documents the techniques de Wilde used to preserve

wedding and christening gowns, restore family bibles and atlases, and stored papers and photographs (Alexander, 2002).

In *Living's* April/May 1993 article about "Saving old books," restorer Jerilyn Glen Davis discusses how to preserve a book "as a historic artifact" ("Saving old," p. 38). Unlike the less costly repairs and transformations discussed above, this article stresses that "a poor repair job is worse than none at all" and suggests that in order to preserve the details of a book's original construction, one should consult a professional ("Saving old," 38). Restoration of antique chandeliers is the focus of an episode of *Martha Stewart Living* that aired on the Style Network on July 19, 2004. In the segment, Stewart visits Anthony Bazza Restorations in New York City to learn from Bazza how to clean the metal work and crystals on a chandelier, as well as how often such a fixture should be cleaned. Heralding the importance of Bazza's restorations, Stewart ends the six-minute segment by stating that "he's a living treasure taking care of our treasures" (Krzyzanowski, 2004e).

Stewart's more modest ideas and suggestions offer a range of projects for viewers from a range of class backgrounds. Many of Stewart's suggestions value spending time over money, recycling instead of purchasing new, and self-reliance over dependency. However, like *Living's* more expensive and time-consuming suggestions, even the articles and episodes on "saving" encourage audience members to aspire to live according to Stewart's tastes, and the do-it-yourself projects still require an investment of time and skill. Further, these more modest projects remain focused on teaching Stewart's audience to strive for an upper class ideal.

Conclusion

Martha Stewart ends her discussion of the “principle of comparison” with a caveat: “don’t apply it to people: their fine points are indeterminate and infinitely more complex” (1992c, p. 135). Despite her warning, Stewart’s magazines and television programs do exactly that. Judgments in *Living* begin with comparisons between with Stewart’s childhood class position in New Jersey, and her adulthood class position in New York and New England; though the picture Stewart paints of her childhood is relatively rosy, it is clear that her adult class position is endlessly preferable. The pages and segments of *Martha Stewart Living* encourage readers and viewers to make similar comparisons in their own lives, prompting them to compare their current lives to what their lives could be like if they follow Stewart’s example.

Stewart’s texts include a wealth of suggestions that may appeal and be accessible to audience members from a number of different class positions. Some suggestions offer quick tips for increasing self-sufficiency and saving time and money, but these pale in comparison to *Living*’s displays of luxury and grandeur. Implicit in all of *Living*’s suggestions (which require ample amounts of time, money, and space) is the promise that following these ideas and instructions will result in increased social mobility. By encouraging audience members to focus on upscale emulation, Stewart persuades audience members to prefer “appearance over substance, substituting the attainable ‘look’ for the unattainable class ascension” (Mason & Meyers, 2001, p. 820).

The result of Stewart’s attempt to help her audience acquire cultural and social capital, as Margaret Talbot (1996) argues, is not social mobility, it is conformity: “... taste is no longer an expression of individuality. It is, more often, an instrument of

conformism, a way to assure ourselves that we're living by the right codes, dictated or sanctioned by experts" (p. 35). Through *Martha Stewart Living*, readers and viewers are encouraged to imitate Stewart's lifestyle and adopt Stewart's taste; the desire *Living* creates, however, masks the very real economic realities that will keep many in Stewart's audience from truly achieving Stewart's status.

Conclusion

Sarah A. Leavitt (2002), in her cultural history of domestic advice, argues that an examination of domestic texts offers "a way of seeing and understanding American culture" (p. 205). Because, as Leavitt argues, domestic-advice manuals reflect the cultural contexts in which they were written, analysis of them "can teach us about the way in which the home is a place where national ideologies of class, race, and gender are expressed in *things*...." (p. 206). This is precisely what I have aimed to do in my examination of Martha Stewart's magazines and television programs.

This chapter began with an exploration of *Living*'s modes of address, which simultaneously draws Stewart's audience into her personal life and make Stewart's readers and listeners her subordinates. Use of direct address and display and discussion of Stewart's homes, family members, and social occasions offers readers and viewers the chance to build para-social relationships with Stewart. These relationships are proscribed by Stewart's self-constructed teacherly demeanor, and her use of educational terminology, arcane historical details, and experts. These modes of address provide the foundation for Stewart's lifestyle advice and position her as model and authority. Both roles encourage audience members to imitate Stewart's example.

The fact that Stewart's life serves as a model for *Living* confuses the gender roles represented in Stewart's texts. Unlike many women's magazines' traditional focus on women's duties in the home, *Living* acknowledges the ways in which contemporary women's relationships with the home have changed as more women, like Stewart, have entered the paid workforce. Similarly, Stewart's identity as a divorcee with a grown daughter lessens *Living*'s focus on heterosexual and familial relationships, which opens Stewart's texts to new audiences and alternate readings. Despite the openness in *Martha Stewart Living*, Stewart's magazines and television programs ultimately focus rather narrowly on women's roles in the home. Though Stewart has been credited for bringing a new respect to homekeeping and reclaiming women's lost knowledge, she has done so by continually raising standards, increasing the number and difficulty of domestic chores, and making perfection an expectation. The result is that *Martha Stewart Living* is created for and consumed by women, and its pages and segments encourage women to feel responsible for the work in their homes at a time when demands outside the home are stronger than ever.

While *Living* may be an archive of American traditions, it is certainly not a very diverse archive. Though Stewart's magazines and television programs frequently give lip service to diversity, whiteness dominates. When African Americans appear in *Living*'s issues and episodes, they are frequently represented through stereotypes that position them as lacking refinement. These stereotypes are broken only when the person or tradition featured involves an elite class sensibility. When *Living* includes people or traditions outside the United States, England, France, and Italy are portrayed as exemplary, while non-white cultures, deemed exotic, are appropriated to spice up white

American culture. Religion is treated similarly in *Martha Stewart Living*; Protestant holidays, like Easter and Christmas, are regularly featured as important American celebrations, while many other faiths' holidays go unrepresented and unnoticed.

Stewart's rags-to-riches story serves as the framework through which class is represented in her media texts. Stewart's story suggests that elite tastes can be learned and that social mobility can be achieved if readers and viewers spend their time, space, and money to build cultural capital. Stewart provides both concrete cultural lessons and images of luxury and grandeur to inspire her audiences to emulate her example. The fantasy that is Stewart's story hides the reality that social mobility is not so easily accomplished.

In sum, *Martha Stewart Living* can be read as a reflection the ideologies of gender, race, and class prevalent in the United States at the turn of the twenty-first century. *Living* reveals that discourses about gender and sexuality are changing, but those changes are slow and uneven. Dominant discourses of race, *Living* suggests, have changed very little; despite increased reverence for diversity, whiteness remains the norm in *Living*. Discourses of class are similarly treated on the pages and episodes of *Martha Stewart Living*, where upper class ideals are presented as superior to more popular tastes. The popularity of Stewart's magazines and television programs suggest that these messages resonate with many Americans.

While Leavitt (2002) believes the analysis of the texts produced by domestic advisors has much to offer the study of American culture, she realizes that "the writings of domestic advisors demonstrate cultural ideals, not cultural realities" (p. 5). Similar to Stuart Hall's (1980b) claim in "Encoding/Decoding" that encoding cannot fully structure

decoding, Leavitt argues that the “historical value [of domestic-advice manuals] lies in uncovering the ways certain women understood the connections between their homes and the larger world” (p. 5). Building on Hall’s and Leavitt’s assertions, in the following chapter, I examine the meanings Stewart’s audiences make from *Martha Stewart Living*.

Notes

¹ See Rubin & Rubin (2001) for a meta-analysis of research on parasocial relationships.

² The online program guide for the July 21, 2004 episode of *Martha Stewart Living* on the Style Network describes the studio as containing two separate sets. Studio set A is based on Stewart's East Hampton home and contains a kitchen, mudroom, pantry, home-office space and library. Set B includes a kitchen based on Stewart's kitchen at her Turkey Hill home in Westport, Connecticut (Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, 2004).

³ None of the web site features Stewart discusses in this article are components of the current version of marthastewart.com.

⁴ The "askMartha" segments were taped for rebroadcast, not broadcast live.

⁵ The term "shelter" is the magazine industry's classification for magazines catering to readers' interests in the home and garden.

⁶ I found only two letters to the editor from men in explicitly heterosexual relationships who wrote to express their interest in *Living*. In September 1996, George Garcia writes to tell of how "armed with a stack of my wife's back issues" of *Martha Stewart Living* he planned a baby shower for his wife. He thanks the staff for the information in the magazine, with which he "planned the menu, negotiated a venue, assembled a guest list, and hired a harpist" (p. 24). Bruce Abels writes in "Letters to the Editor" in the October 1996 issue that he "reluctantly picked up" his wife's copy of *Living* and "Much to my amazement, I soon found an outstanding gardening tip about 'Natural Trellises' that, two months later, is working fabulously in our garden." He says he "now make[s] it a point to peruse every issue" (p. 28).

⁷ The three additional articles appeared in *Living*'s September 2002, May 2003, and August 2003 issues. These articles appear, of course, as the national debate over gay marriage was unfolding in the United States, suggesting that as American culture softened to gay and lesbian couples Stewart's publication followed suit. By the time *Living*'s first article featuring a gay male couple appeared in 2002, gay and lesbian couples had successfully fought for domestic partnership rights in Hawaii (1997), California (2000) and Vermont (2000); Massachusetts would follow in 2003. All of the articles in my sample explicitly identifying gay couples as such were printed in *Living* during Douglas Brenner's tenure as Editor-in-Chief (May 2001-June 2003). It is likely that Brenner's influence may have been a factor in the inclusion.

⁸ Though a part of the content in Stewart's media outlets focuses on the revival of women's lost or devalued knowledge, a number of stories and segments introduce topics and tasks that are unlikely topics for a women's magazine. For example, *Martha Stewart Living* magazine includes articles on building an outdoor fireplace (Russell, 2000),

detailing a car (Brink, 2001a), and home office tax deductions (McCleary, 2002). Stewart's television programs also feature unexpected topics like a behind-the-scenes tour of Lincoln Centre in New York City (Krzyzanowski, 2002f), "Lawn Mower Tune-Up 101" (Krzyzanowski, 2002b), and the manufacturing process of reproduction doorknobs, handles and hinges (Krzyzanowski, 2004e). The inclusion of these unanticipated topics may be an attempt to empower female readers, giving them new knowledge and information, and may also be an attempt to cover topics assumed to be interesting to male readers.

⁹ See the Spring 2001 issue of *Bust*, an alternative magazine "for women with something to get off their chests." The feminist-identified magazine focused this entire issue on homekeeping and crafts. The editor, Debbie Stoller, suggested in her "Editor's letter" that Betty Friedan turned women's attention away from the home, and now, dissatisfied with focusing only on work outside the home, women are returning to "the joys of cooking, knitting, sewing, and other simple domestic activities." She asks "why [do] we regard traditionally male activities with such reverence, but traditionally female ones with such disdain. Is it the accidental fallout of 30 years of feminist rebellion against being entrapped in the home? Is it internalized misogyny?" (Stoller, 2001, p. 4).

¹⁰ I was unable to find any information on the nationality of Stewart's readers and viewers. However, I discussed in Chapter One that Stewart's television program is dubbed and distributed in Europe and Latin America (McMurdy, 2000) and is shown on Japan's "women-oriented cable network" LaLa (Kelts, 2002, para. 3). Stewart's goods are sold in the Canadian department store Zellers (McMurdy, 2000, para. 7) and in the Japanese retailer The Seiyu. A magazine modeled on Stewart's *Living*, called *Martha*, is produced for Japanese readers (Dignam, 2001, p. 7).

¹¹ Despite the lack of non-white faces in "Fourth of July," the article does include a limited range of regional diversity. For example, the article discusses "Hillbilly Day" in South Carolina, "Tom Sawyer Days" in Missouri, and the National Cherry Festival in Michigan (Barnett, 1992). This regional diversity, however, fails to represent the United States' racial diversity.

¹² In comparison, the Thanksgiving traditions represented in these articles do offer a narrow sense of regional diversity (north as compared to south, east as compared to west) through the menus served at each celebration. However, once again, this regional diversity does not translate into racial diversity.

¹³ In the article, Prentis is obviously the hired help at Silver's second home. In contrast, *Living*'s other articles about Thanksgiving meals are cooked by the hosts of the celebration. For example, Italian-born Carolina Bunce cooks for and eats with her family and friends (Feiring, 1995) and restaurant and tavern owners Brendan and Cris Walsh cook for and eat with their family and friends (Barbour, 1997).

¹⁴ In 2002, Easter was on March 31. The March issue of *Living* has been designated the “Special Gardening Issue” since 1996. Apparently seen as incompatible with gardening, Easter was mostly absent from the March 2002 issue.

¹⁵ The difference in income and education of Stewart’s print, online, and television audiences suggests that the lifestyle suggestions contained in Stewart’s television programs would be less costly and time-consuming—less focused on luxury—than her print and online suggestions. The time and medium constraints of television would restrict what Stewart could show on television as well. The messages I analyzed from my sample of Stewart’s television programs were consistently less focused on upper-class privilege and elite taste than Stewart’s magazines; thus, this section includes fewer examples from Stewart’s television programs than from Stewart’s magazine.

¹⁶ During the segment, Michelle Roth stressed that “Nine times out of ten, the brides who come in to see us are carrying their *Martha Stewart Weddings* magazine and they’re carrying it like a bible.” Out of all of Stewart’s texts, her wedding books and magazines are the most focused on the demonstration of wealth and the production of fantasy—from the orchestration of expensive events to the events’ details: cakes, flowers, clothing, meals, etc. As MSLO’s promotional materials for advertisers state, Stewart’s wedding magazine “sets a new standard in magazine publishing for the bride and groom” (Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, n.d.) This “new standard” created by *Martha Stewart Weddings*, as Roth suggests, affects those outside the publishing industry as well, simultaneously raising the expectations for families hosting and guests attending weddings.

¹⁷ *Living* uses the term “flea markets” loosely. The magazine’s article, “Flea Markets” includes tips from antique dealers and market goers looking for “art pottery and mission furniture” (Evans, 1991, p. 24); “The Art of the Deal,” describes the market that takes over the town of Brimfield, Massachusetts several times a year. The article suggests that Brimfield has “its own elite” composed of antiques dealers from many major cities (Barbour 1993c, p. 63). The items Stewart highlights from these “flea markets” are definitely second-hand, but they are by no means common or tasteless. In Bourdieu’s (1984) study of consumer behavior, he found that members of the upper classes were more likely to acquire “their furniture ... from an antique-dealer more often than those born into other classes, who tended to buy from a department store, a specialized shop or the Flea Market” (p. 78). Stewart’s preference for antiques falls right in line with Bourdieu’s findings.

CHAPTER 4

RECEPTION STUDY OF MARTHA STEWART'S FANS

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined the discourses of gender, race, and class in Martha Stewart's magazine, television programs, and website. Additionally, I examined Stewart's role in each of media texts. In this chapter, I use small group interviews to understand how Stewart's audience members view her and her texts.

Through analysis of the transcripts from nine small group interview sessions, I discovered two types of Martha Stewart fans: *Living* fans, who are drawn to Stewart's media messages, but distance themselves from Stewart as a celebrity; and Martha fans, who enjoy Stewart's media messages mostly because they are interested in Stewart's public persona. Interestingly, the two groups coalesce in their support for Stewart in their reactions to the ImClone scandal. I argue in this chapter that an examination of the two fan groups' positions, and the ways in which fans move between the two groups, has much to offer fan studies. In the construction of this argument, I begin with a discussion of the term "fan" and discuss the two types of Martha Stewart fans I interviewed; then turn to the words of the people I interviewed and discuss the ways in which they made sense of the gender, race, and class discourses in *Martha Stewart Living*.

Martha Stewart Fans?

One of the most difficult—and most basic—aspects of my research was determining who was a Martha Stewart fan and what that meant. Of the thirty-eight interview participants, seven expressed hesitation when asked whether they considered themselves to be fans of Martha Stewart. While twenty-five participants responded "yes,"

and six responded “no,” the hesitant seven answered “don’t know,” “not really,” “quasi,” “yes/no,” “to a certain extent,” and “undecided.” What I considered to be a fairly straightforward question was easy for most, yet caused confusion for some. Even more intriguing, many of the respondents who replied that they were not fans of Martha Stewart knew more about Stewart’s personal life and media texts than those who responded that they were fans of Martha Stewart; and the participants who responded that they were fans of Martha Stewart repeatedly expressed ambivalence about their interest in Stewart and her media texts.

Making sense of the positions the interview participants took required that I reexamine the term “fan.” In “*Star Trek* rerun, reread, rewritten,” Henry Jenkins (1988) offers one definition: “one becomes a fan not by being a regular viewer of a particular program but by translating that viewing into some type of cultural activity, by sharing feelings and thoughts about the program content with friends, by joining a community of other fans who share common interests” (p. 88). Many of my interviewees were regular viewers, but not all of them felt comfortable taking part in public activities or discussions about Stewart, and none of them, at least to my knowledge, felt they were part of a community of other fans. Were they still fans?

John Tulloch and Henry Jenkins (1995), in their work on science fiction audiences, differentiate between fans and followers, suggesting that fans are “active participants within fandom as a social, cultural and interpretive institution,” and that followers are “audience members who regularly watch and enjoy [media texts] but who claim no larger social identity on the basis of this consumption” (p. 23). The term “follower” comes closer to explaining the identifications of many of my interview

participants; but through the course of my interviews, it became increasingly clear that many of the people I interviewed in Stewart's audience were both "active participants," and regular consumers, yet they adamantly disliked Stewart and did not call themselves fans. Where do they fit in?

In "New Audiences, New Textualities," Jonathan Gray (2003) calls attention to two important, and often overlooked, types of fans: "anti-fans" and "non-fans." "Anti-fans," he argues, are those "who strongly dislike a given text or genre, considering it inane, stupid, morally bankrupt and/or aesthetic drivel" (p. 70). Though anti-fans evaluate a text entirely oppositely from common definitions of fans, Gray suggests that anti-fans may be as intimately involved in a text as fans, and may be similarly organized and visible. "Non-fans," on the other hand, are those "who do view or read a text, but not with any intense involvement" (p. 74). Unlike fans and anti-fans, non-fans may experience the text from a considerable distance and thus while they may enjoy a text, they "watch when they can rather than must" (p. 74). Gray's offerings help to explain those who adamantly oppose Stewart and those who are not sure if they are Stewart fans. However, like fans and followers as described above, anti-fans and non-fans are clear-cut and separate categories. Some of the audience members I interviewed described that their feelings for Stewart changed as they followed the progress of the ImClone scandal. If an audience member can exhibit differing fan characteristics over time, then how do we account for changes in fandom?

Matt Hills (2002) persuasively argues in *Fan Cultures* that fandom is not a "thing," it is instead performative (p. xi). He suggests that a question that audience researchers have not yet addressed is "what fandom does culturally . . ." (p. xii). Hills'

assertion echoes Joli Jenson's (1992) claim, made in response to the stigmatization of fans; she suggests that "fandom is an aspect of how we make sense of the world, in relation to mass media, and in relation to our historical social, cultural location" (p. 27). "Fan" is clearly a much more complicated term than it is usually allowed to be. The people I interviewed may or may not be fans—and their fandom no doubt changed with time and the progression of the ImClone scandal. It is the ways in which they articulate their feelings about *Martha Stewart Living* that interest me. Importantly, the ambivalences Martha Stewart fans expressed as their fan positions shifted in response to the ImClone scandal demonstrate that being a fan is a complex experience affected by the social context in which a text exists.

As my interviews progressed, a distinct pattern of fan-ship developed. In my research, I found two different groups in Stewart's audience that I believe might be called "fans": those who are drawn to Stewart's texts and products for their perceived high quality and their beautiful presentation, but disassociate from her persona (*Living* fans); and those who are drawn to the public debate over Stewart's persona and read her media texts as a way of watching for cues about Stewart's "true" persona (Martha fans). The line between the two groups is fuzzy, however, and fans' identifications are not static—they moved quite a bit over the course of the ImClone scandal.

Living Fans

The first group I discuss are the fans who prefer the information Stewart delivers through her various media texts (magazines, TV shows, website, etc.), almost all of which share the title *Living*, to her public persona. Of the audience members I interviewed, I believe this group of fans comes closest to being fans in the traditional

sense of the term. They are drawn to Martha Stewart because of their interest in what she does and how she does it; but they distance themselves from Stewart's persona in response to public criticism of her actions—whether in response to criticism of Stewart by members in the small group interview, in response to their own experiences with or beliefs about Stewart, or in response to media stories about Stewart.

What I heard repeatedly from the people I interviewed is a sense that their feelings about Stewart's media productions can be—and sometimes are—separate from their feelings about Martha Stewart the celebrity. *Living* fans were drawn to *Martha Stewart Living* not for its host, Martha Stewart, but for its content. Candace clearly articulated this: “it’s not her personality, because I find that she’s kind of phony in a way, when she’s interacting with others. It’s like a script. You know, the show, the presentation and what she does I’m interested in, but her personally, there are others on the Food Network that I prefer to her.”¹ Beatrice similarly explained, “I don’t really watch her, I watch what she’s doing.” Later in our conversation, Candace shared that she once had gone to a public lecture given by Stewart and was disappointed when Stewart did not sign autographs or spend time with her fans afterwards. While she was upset with Stewart's behavior, it did not change her interest in Stewart's television program: “I don’t care, you know, she’s still Martha, I’m still entertained by her program. Again, the information she supplies, she doesn’t have to be nice to me.”

Barbara acknowledged the criticism of Stewart's public persona, but explained that it has little bearing on her interest in Stewart: “I think the biggest criticism is her personality and what difference does that make? When you’re watching a television show, why do you have to know the personality of the person? It has nothing to do with

what she has to present to you. . . I totally erase anything else.” Kira expressed a similar sentiment: “I really distance myself from Martha Stewart personally, but it’s just the images of home and comfort that she projects that I really enjoy.” Typical of *Living* fans, Fiona acknowledged the criticisms of Stewart, but maintained that they do not sway her from Stewart’s message: “I don’t have a problem with her, I agree that she can seem condescending, but I can still take the information, I don’t have judgment about her message.”

Despite their selection of Stewart based on her expert status and her breadth of knowledge, most of the participants said they watch Stewart more to observe than to undertake the projects she offers. Emily explained that she watches Stewart’s cooking segments “more as an observer, and less as someone who would actually take notes and do any of that.” Beatrice shared that she takes pleasure from simply looking at Stewart’s magazine: “I enjoy the magazines, sitting there and looking at things.” Sarah connected her experience of watching *Martha Stewart Living* to her interest in watching many of the shows on the Food Network: “the funny thing is I’m not a huge cook or homemaker or any of that kind of stuff, but I love the Food Channel, I’ll just watch the shows, I’m never going to do any of that stuff, but I’ll look at it and I really love it.”

Many interviewees expressed that they found watching Stewart on television to be calming. Lane connected her response to Stewart’s voice to feelings from childhood: “I think part of the reason I watch her is her voice is so calm most of the time and it’s almost like being with Captain Kangaroo at eight o’clock in the morning when I was a little kid.” Katie similarly noted Stewart’s voice and described it as a “wonderful,

modulated voice, it's just really easy on the eyes and ears to watch her." Barbara appreciated the pace with which Stewart addresses her viewers:

I find that very calming, she's never in a rush. If she is in a rush, she doesn't show it. I think that presents what she's doing a lot better, if she got very excitable, it would be more intimidating, but that she holds, and is very calm doing everything even though she's reading off a screen, and fifty people are screaming in her earphones and everything, I think she has an amazing capacity to be very calming and let people think, yes, you can do it too.

Again and again, interviewees described Stewart's programs and periodicals as an outlet for relaxation and escape. Karla considered the television program to be a "pleasant escape": "There are beautiful things on it, it's relatively mindless, I don't have to think a whole lot . . . it's just really absorbing." Nadia similarly said, "when I watch it it's kind of relaxing to just see these people cooking and baking and decorating." Hailey also indicated that Stewart's magazine is an escape: "the magazine, it's a lot of escape, it's a lot of, I think the photographs are gorgeous, it's a beautifully produced magazine." Delores suggests that the magazine takes her "away from all the stuff in my life, it's relaxing."

As Delores's comment suggests, some interviewees watched or read in order to imagine another way of life. For example, Kira shared that she enjoys Stewart's "gardening parts, mostly because as somebody who lives in the city, they are really escapist." Maggie maintained that when reading Stewart's magazine: "instead of doing anything, you can just sit at home and flip through the magazine for half an hour and live vicariously." Karla conveyed a similar perspective: "there's some element, I don't know exactly what to say about it, but there's definitely an element of fantasy in it for me."

Although most of the fans I interviewed suggested that they undertook few, if any, of Stewart's proposed projects, they were most interested in and most likely to

undertake projects that saved time, made them feel more organized, or were quick and easy. Mary, an RN who works full time, explained that of all of Stewart's projects, she likes the projects that give her more free time: "I love all the five minute recipe things, something to maximize my time because I know I have to do all of this stuff at home, but I don't have that much time." Robin, who works full-time as an editor, also expressed that she would like more free time: "I wish I had a TON more time to devote to my home life. I think I'd be much more likely to be Martha-esque if I had more time." Carole lamented that she wished she had more time for Stewart's projects: "But, I really like to do things. I don't often have time for it, I have a million begun projects that I will never finish."

Alongside a longing for time was a deep appreciation of Stewart's perceived organization. Wynne suggested that she enjoys Martha Stewart because she believes they share a desire for organization: "I'm extremely OCD, and she seems very kind of obsessive-compulsive, too. I love the way she organizes things, because it's exactly the way I want it." Kira echoed many *Living* fans' feelings when she noted that one's sense of organization in the home prepared them for the world outside the home: "I like the fact that she has organization. The way your house looks is a reflection of what's going on inside you and I'm always trying to achieve that sense of order because there's so much chaos going on outside." Carole's reaction to one of the clips viewed during the interview sums up how watching Stewart's organization could be a pleasurable experience: "To me, those shelves, so perfectly arranged, is such a comfort because mine are so disorganized and you know, I'd love to be able to do some of that, but I just don't seem to have the time."

Perhaps because they feel pressed for time, yet do enjoy activities like the ones Stewart suggests, many interviewees conveyed that they are selective about the projects they undertake. For example, Carole asserted, “I don’t have time to do lots of it and I just choose what pertains to me and I feel I can manage to do.” Several respondents indicated that they preferred Stewart’s “good things,” the name given to relatively simple, quick, and inexpensive ideas in Stewart’s texts. Hailey explained her interest in “good things,” which reflected many *Living* fans’ interest in these projects: “I like some of her good things because they are super-quick, you can do them or not do them, or kind of just keep them in the back of your mind.”

Many *Living* fans suggested that when they used Stewart’s suggestions, they may not follow her instructions carefully, use the exact ingredients or supplies suggested, and/or use the idea in total. Describing her interest in Stewart’s holiday suggestions, Catherine stated, “it gives you good ideas, you could just take portions and incorporate it.” When faced with a recipe that requires ingredients that Grace does not have, she says “I fudge it and do with what I have.” Isabel reported that even though she follows Stewart’s instructions pretty carefully, “I add my own thoughts and ideas as well.”

While the *Living* fans I interviewed reported that they undertook few of Stewart’s projects because of a lack of time, they nonetheless expressed interest in the projects, even the most time-consuming ones. Many suggested that Stewart’s projects gave them inspiration for projects they may later undertake. For example, Candace conveyed that she inspired by Stewart’s television program: “I watch it and I think, ‘oh yeah, maybe I can do that.’ It just gives me ideas, gives me options.” Olivia shared that she enjoys Stewart’s holiday magazines and television specials because the ideas they contain are

“so festive it gets you in the mood.” Karla, who loves Stewart’s interior decorating tips and sense of color, said, “I don’t have the budget for it, but I am able to get inspired by some things.” After watching one of the television segments on organizing that we screened before our discussion, Fiona said, “I’ll tell you, it inspires me to take everything out of my linen closet and have it not be all just crammed in there and looking for everything, you know?”

Several fans indicated that they collect and store information about tasks that they may want to undertake at a later time. Barbara’s position is representative of many *Living* fans: “She has a lot to offer on her show, and if you only take away one thing you want to do or write it down or store and use it at a later date . . . I like doing those things, I don’t always have time, but sometimes I make the time.” Grace reported that she has “a ton of magazine clippings that I will put to use one day.” Hailey similarly offered that she and her spouse Hannah also clip information deemed useful from Stewart’s magazine: “we do go through and we cut out the articles that we think are going to be useful and we do have a giant binder in the house that we do use.” She also reported that she and Hannah make collage cards to send to friends from the magazine clippings they know they will not use.

Hailey’s discussion of cutting up her magazines appalled Karla, who could not imagine doing so, “I won’t even dog-ear mine because they’re going to be collectors’ items!” Karla was not the only interviewee to treasure her *Martha Stewart Living* magazines. Candace also revealed that she keeps all of Stewart’s magazines, “I have to say I save her magazines, I don’t save any other magazines as reference.”

While several interviewees mentioned that they frequently record Stewart’s television program, many more expressed interest in Stewart’s website. In particular, the

group of five women I interviewed in an America Online chat room all met and became friends on the bulletin boards on Stewart's site. Grace explained that she likes the website because it "allows me to find my own interests." Isabel, who was planning her wedding when we spoke, offered that, "I download a ton of recipes, ideas, suggestions for wedding shops, vendors, programs, etc."

Despite the fact that *Living* fans take great pleasure from watching and reading Stewart's texts, many of them are reluctant to share their interest in Stewart with others, in part because of the public criticism of Stewart. Carole revealed that she used to be less open about her interest in Stewart than she now is: "It's funny, because I was sort of like a closet Martha Stewart devotee for a long time . . . I was so stupid about it and then I decided 'this is ridiculous,' but so many people I knew were really discouraging about her." When discussing his interest in Stewart, Aaron confessed that "I love to talk about her, and I think she's fascinating, and part of me feels really pathetic, too, that I read her." Dara offered that she is selective about sharing her interest in Stewart with others because she perceives "somewhat of a stigma attached to being a fan." Rachel is so guarded about her feelings for Stewart that she did not tell her friends or family that she was attending my interview: "I didn't tell anybody I was coming here today. I didn't want anybody to know. I'll be honest, I thought it was really interesting . . . I kind of like her stuff, but I wouldn't tell anybody necessarily and that's the straight up truth."

A few participants disclosed that their friends and family teased them for their interest in Stewart. Carole disclosed that she is teased by one of her daughters, "She's one of those really practical people and she works, and it's a little too much for her, she laughs at that, good natured, but you know." Pamela reported that sharing her interest in

Stewart with friends and family sometimes “elicits a giggle or an eye roll.” Karla shared that her friends sometimes tease her: “they’ll joke with me sometimes, oh you know, you know, ‘we could count on you to bring Martha’ or something like that.” Mary indicated that she received “grief” from her husband and children. She reported that her two sons think she is “psychotic” for taping Stewart’s television programs and keeping a carefully labeled collection of videotapes.

Despite the possibility for teasing or scorn, a few fans openly maintain their interest in Stewart; these *Living* fans use humor to reference their interest in Stewart in daily contexts. Lane, a clergywoman, disclosed that she has referenced Stewart in her sermons: “if I talk about Christmas busy-ness, how people get stressed out before the holidays and we want everything to be perfect, I’ll confess to having been in the ‘Martha Zone.’” Like Lane, Janice conveyed that she used a humorous phrase to indicate that she is imitating Stewart: “When I do something like her, even if I haven’t seen it on TV, when I do something creative, I will say, ‘I’m having a Martha Stewart moment,’ and I use that as an expression.” Mary relayed that she often quotes Stewart’s famous phrase, “it’s a good thing,” to others: “that’s a fun thing that I say and I say it to everyone, it drives my family to distraction. I say it to people at work, and I’ll say to them, ‘Oh, that’s a good thing, like my friend Martha will always say.’”

In sum, *Living* fans are drawn to *Martha Stewart Living* for its content and beauty. They admire Stewart’s expertise, attention to detail and professionalism. While they use Stewart’s texts to relax or escape, and collect the information contained in the texts, *Living* fans do not necessarily undertake the projects Stewart demonstrates. When they do take Stewart’s advice, they tend to select quick tasks that focus on saving time or

increasing organization. Many *Living* fans suggest that they are fans, yet they can be reserved about their interest, in part because of the public ridicule of Martha Stewart. Most have learned to be cautious because they have been teased. Only a few are such strong fans that they do not care what others think of them; interestingly, when they do discuss Stewart with others, they use humor, indicating that they do not want to appear to have as serious an interest in Stewart as they actually do. In many ways, criticism of Stewart, and the impact it has on *Living* fans, shames them into silence about their interest in Stewart and her texts, and the meanings associated with them.

Martha Fans

The members of the other group I identified were, unlike *Living* fans, less interested in the *information* Stewart conveys through her media texts than they were in Stewart's *persona*—both as constructed through her media texts (particularly her TV shows) and her public persona as a celebrity. More anti-fan than fan, these respondents made fun of Stewart and/or adamantly disliked her; like Jonathan Gray's anti-fans, they were intimately familiar with Stewart's life and her media texts.

As aforementioned, in each of the interviews I asked participants to introduce themselves and say a bit about their feelings about Martha Stewart. Those who were not comfortable calling themselves "a Martha Stewart fan" expressed positions from conflicted to staunchly opposed. For example, Janice's feelings about Stewart were contradictory: "I enjoy Martha Stewart and I don't enjoy Martha Stewart. I'm mixed." Maribel's feelings about Stewart, on the other hand, were antagonistic: "I'm about as opposite to Martha Stewart as you can get. I think she's full of shit and I don't give a fuck what she says."

Many Martha fans regularly watched Stewart on television, read her magazines and followed stories about Stewart in the popular press. Unlike the *Living* fans, they described their interest in Stewart as connected to Stewart as a celebrity, not the ideas that she offers. Correlated with the degree to which these fans were conflicted or adamant in their dislike of Stewart, their reactions to her ranged from amusement to hatred. Nadia found Stewart humorous: “I like watching her shows, they’re somewhat entertaining and it is just hilarious watching her, it’s just a trip to me.” Elaine, who expressed some interest in Stewart’s projects, said that in her daily life Stewart was “basically the butt of jokes.” Bethany, who shared that she knew very little about Stewart’s media offerings, also thinks of Stewart as a joke: “She’s always just been a reference point, kind of like a fake person, she’s pretty much a *Saturday Night Live* sketch to me in my head.” Jackie expressed that Stewart irritates her: “In terms of what repels, for me, it’s just about everything about her. I mean, she just grates on my last nerve.”

Several interviewees expressed hostility or aggression when discussing their feelings about Stewart. Abby’s response was typical of many respondents’ feelings: “I found her shows to be, there was a tone that was patronizing, there was an edge that was just like, I wanted to say ‘F.U.’ to her, like I’d be all over her and be like ‘who the hell do you think you are?’” Tom described his position on Stewart as “neutral,” yet his statement about his feelings for Stewart conveyed a bit of animosity: “I don’t know if I like her or I hate her. Some days I’d like to jump in the TV and slap her. That’s just me. There are other days where I watch it and that’s a really good idea, it would be nice if I had the time to do this stuff that she does.”

Many of the Martha fans who were critical of Stewart's persona cited evidence gathered from what I call "New England lore." As aforementioned, my interviews were conducted in New England because it is Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia's home base and frequent reference point. Many of the respondents recounted experiences that they had personally had or that people they knew had with Stewart. The experiences were almost always negative and definitely influenced the interviewees' opinions of Stewart.

Jenny, who works in food production, indicated that she had colleagues who had previously worked with Stewart:

People who have worked in her catering [sic.] when she was just a very small caterer, don't have, how do I say this, I haven't heard a lot of positive aspects of their job when they worked for her. They loved working with each other, but not for Martha, they found her very difficult to work with, she barked, she had high expectations, for everybody else around her."

Elaine revealed that her partner knows Stewart: "now that I live in [a town in Connecticut] and now that I'm with somebody who knows her personally, says she is a vile bitch, I mean, he knows her from the restaurant business, he owns a restaurant down there, so I'm a little tainted." In the course of our discussion, Sarah revealed that her brother had been featured in Stewart's magazine and had formed a negative opinion of Stewart: "But she's so, she's such a, her workers consider her a bitch, you know, I mean they do, she's very, very mean, I know from my brother that she's got a terrible reputation and I think it sort of comes through on the show."

Several participants recounted experiences from attending events at which Stewart was a guest speaker. Janice decided not to attend one of Stewart's talks near her town, but later heard from those who did attend that it had not been worth the time or money:

Martha Stewart came to [a city in Massachusetts] and I think it was at the museum. And when she was at the museum, you could go there for lunch. She came a little late, the food was of her choice and it was salad and a dressing, and made up by somebody, but she controlled it. And it was expensive to go to meet her, like forty-five to fifty dollars, and we're talking fifteen to twenty years ago, and I thought, why waste my money to be in the same room with Martha Stewart, I don't think that's important in my life, and what happened is, she came late, she was in a huff, the food, according to the people that went, was really lousy and they said it was lucky I didn't go, and it was very little of it for the money. Then, she was asked to sign autographs, that was part of the program, and she had to be somewhere else and refused. I don't know where she was going, but she would not be bothered and that made a very negative impression on this area.

As aforementioned, Candace attended one of Stewart's talks and was disappointed in Stewart's lack of interest in her fans:

She's not friendly, she's not nice. Where I saw her at the convention center she was there to promote one of her books, there was a luncheon in her honor and she should in fact have been signing autographs, any celebrity would have done that, but she waved people off, she didn't want to be involved in that and these are fans, you know, these are the people that keep her going, she really should have, I thought, been more responsive to her fans.

Sarah disclosed that she had previously had a crush on Stewart that ended sharply when she met her at the Ivy League business school at which Stewart was speaking. Sarah explained what ended the crush: "She was exactly like she appears, she's very unpleasant, dour, does not smile, she's kind of cold and just not pleasant, you know, I met her and that was it, I kind of lost interest after that." For many, close contact with Stewart developed or supported negative opinions of her.

Some Martha fans developed their dislike of Stewart through their reactions to others' feelings about Stewart. Bethany described that she uses Stewart "as a reference point for making fun of other people." In other words, she makes fun of those she believes display Stewart-like behavior. Sarah indicated that she used gossip about Stewart to connect to others: "Yeah, that's why, I only do the gossip part, because everyone can

get into that.” Maggie, on the other hand, is interested in Stewart because she believes people do not like Stewart: “Other people don’t like her. I think if everyone loved her I would be like [implying she wouldn’t like her]. I kind of like the fact that people don’t like her. I’m very intrigued by that.” Jenny’s intense dislike for Stewart stems from working in the food industry with people who admire Stewart for her culinary skills:

My first connection with [Stewart] was because I was in catering and Martha was *God* in catering and that always irritated me, because it didn’t matter what we did, “Oh no, Martha says it’s got to be *this* way.” “Yeah, but it’s not gonna work here.” “Yeah, but Martha *says* it’s got to be *this* way.” So I never liked Martha even before I knew who Martha was, even though they brought the book and said “Look, it’s Martha Stewart, the *God*.” My question is “why is it *Martha*?” Martha, Martha, Martha, the goddess!

Martha fans who did not have contact with Stewart, either directly or indirectly, used media stories and gossip to help construct their opinions of Stewart. Maggie disclosed that she had read Jerry Oppenheimer’s 1997 unauthorized biography of Stewart, *Just Desserts*, which she found to be “good fun.” She used what she read in the book to develop a position on Stewart’s personal life: “Well, from the biography, I think she has, she keeps in touch with her sister and the biographer tried to paint a very negative picture of her as a mother, but I think she’s very close to the daughter, they do things together and then, then friends, I think she has a pretty rich social life.” Tom described Stewart’s personal life as including: “problems with her mother, problems with her [ex-]husband.” Max recalled a story about Stewart in the tabloids: “Wasn’t there a story way back that she had an episode of the show and it got really, really nasty and she made her mother cry and supposedly the crew members reported this to the tabloids?” Sarah referenced a well-publicized dispute between Stewart and her neighbor: “she ran over her gardener and all this stuff.” Rachel shared that she watched NBC’s May 2003

made-for-TV movie, *Martha Inc*; she described it as portraying Stewart as “really bitchy” and “super non-forgiving.”

Many interviewees reacted to what they perceived as a hardness or rigidity in Stewart. Kira described Stewart as “a bitch on wheels.” Jackie described Stewart as “the bitch of life,” “elitist” and “arrogant.” Bethany suggested Stewart was a “bad person in a scary place.” Abby conveyed that she was repelled by Stewart’s “attitude.” When asked to describe this attitude, Abby responded:

Higher than thou, “I’m a better person than you and I’m going to show you as a lowly person exactly what you could do if you really wanted to try.” I think in her presentation she makes judgments and she throws in these little statements after saying something of a fact and, she’ll say something with an attitude, “and that’s [a] good [thing].” And there’s something about her telling me how I’m supposed to interpret what that recipe was and she’s sort of imposing her value onto me.

For Rachel, Stewart has an “arrogance” as if she’s “the standard.” While Rachel suggested that she is interested in Stewart’s subject matter, she explained that “it’s always hard for me to watch the entire thing because it’s just her half the time and there’s no, there’s no room for flexibility at all.”

Some Martha fans described Stewart’s perceived persona as aggressive, even threatening. Jackie asserted that Stewart “would step on anybody that got in her way.” Kira, who called Stewart “the iron lady of the home,” disclosed that “I wouldn’t want to be within twenty yards of her at any one moment during the day, you know?” Sarah’s opinion of Stewart kept her from applying for a job in her field:

She’s mean to her employees, she steals people’s ideas, she’s just a creep. I’d be afraid of her. A lot of people are afraid of her. I actually was looking at jobs in magazines and there was an opening at *Martha Stewart Living* for a copy editor and that’s kind of what I do for work and I thought, “hmm, that’d be cool,” then I thought, “but I can’t, no, cause I’ve heard she’s horrible, why do that?”

In line with Gray's description of anti-fans, many Martha fans are regular viewers, readers, and users of Stewart's media texts. Several Martha fans suggested that they watched Stewart's television show just to watch Stewart's behavior, especially with guests. Sarah's description was similar to several participants' reasons for watching Stewart: "I'm more interested in her as a person than anything she does, so, I'm just fascinated to see how this dour, creepy woman, what's she going to be like on her show today?" The interest of the guest segments for these viewers lies in the challenge of Stewart's authority, especially because she has framed herself as an expert who has a vast knowledge and performs tasks perfectly. Aaron described that he enjoyed segments in which Stewart interacted with a guest; he felt this is when one could see Stewart's "true" persona:

One of the things I really like to see with her is when she interacts with other people, like oftentimes she'll have guest chefs come on the show, or when she's interviewed and you kind of see this iciness in her that you always hear about in her, that's when it really comes out, she'll have a guest chef on or somebody. She had this woman from the South come on once and was showing her how to do desserts and there was, I mean, obviously this tension between them and it was just so funny, but you know this woman was trying to tell Martha what to do and Martha, you could just hear this edge in her voice, you know saying, "Well, I know that already," and you know trying to be hospitable, but at the same time not wanting to be told how to do things in her kitchen or whatever.

Nadia suggested that she watches Stewart for "comic relief": "it is just hilarious watching her because she's so over the top perfect about it and she wants to out-do her guest chefs, and I think that she is really mentally unbalanced in some part of her head, I mean I just look at her and she looks crazy to me, totally mental."

Unlike *Living* fans who reported that they watched *Martha Stewart Living* to relax and escape, Martha fans reported amusement, irritation or anger when watching the show. Aaron shared that he and his friends laugh at Stewart: "my gay friends, we make

fun of her, there is a side of her that's over the top and she is, there is almost a campy quality to her, to what she does; so in one respect we love her, but at the same time, a lot of it is tongue and cheek, I mean we can really see what is funny about her." Janice insisted that she "mouths off" at Stewart while she is watching her program. Abby, who considers Stewart's attitude a "turnoff," explained that she actively resists Stewart as she watches her: "I don't want that because that represents you and you're kind of bitchy and you're all so holier than thou, and that attitude I don't want, so I don't even want to learn, I'm not even going to remember how to make your applesauce cause your applesauce sucks." Jenny revealed that she is so repelled by Stewart that she changes the channel as soon Stewart's program comes on:

I walk in and Martha Stewart is on at 9 o'clock and I always leave the TV on when I walk out the door, and I walk in and it's like "oh fuck"—bink—[channel being changed] and I'll pop on *Regis and Kathie Lee* or usually I go for *Cybil*, but it's like "Oh! Martha Stewart's on again" and it just irritates me and I just immediately change that channel, I just gotta get her off of my TV because I don't want them to give her one bit of rating from me, you know?

Maribel reported that she sometimes phones her friends when she is watching Stewart on television, to share her amusement or frustration, "what has happened to me on a fairly regularly basis is that I'll call people when I'm watching Martha Stewart and be like 'Oh my God that idiot's at the miso factory you've got to see this,' and then she, my friend Sara's at home, and she pulls on the TV and she's like, 'What a fuck-wad!'"

While the Martha fans are drawn to Stewart for different reasons than the *Living* fans, they are similarly devoted in their interest in acquiring information; instead of collecting and treasuring Stewart's texts, they read biographies and parodies of her, and create or seek information critical of Stewart. Emily reported that she writes parodies of Stewart's "projects that may or may not be worth the effort" and emails them to her

friends and her mother. A number of the interviewees enjoyed parodies of Stewart on *Saturday Night Live*; Rachel described that these parodies “are really funny, just because she goes on and on about the little particularness [*sic.*] of certain things, which no one, I mean, it’s just funny to see that in exaggerated form.”

Several respondents discussed taking pleasure in a series of published parodies by Tom Connor. Olivia mentioned that she owned one: “I have a book called, *Weddings by Martha Stuart* and it’s a spoof on her wedding stuff. It portrays her as real, very difficult to work for; she’s literally getting down on the ground and beating up the waiters and waitresses at this wedding she’s catering and the people that are working for her. And she’s also shoving the bride and groom and she’s behind them smiling.” Sarah reported that she had purchased one of the parodies and received another as a gift by someone who knew she would enjoy it. She discussed that one of her favorite parts is a play on Stewart’s calendar as printed her magazine: “And, the things that they do in the spoof are incredible, like furnish all of Egypt or something like that, just crazy stuff and I think that’s the joke, she’s like this superwoman . . . the whole [parody] is about her doing these superhuman things.”

Unlike *Living* fans, Martha fans are drawn to *Martha Stewart Living* to observe and critique Martha Stewart. They dislike Stewart for what they perceive as her arrogance and hostility, especially as these behaviors play out with guests on Stewart’s TV show. Their opinions of Stewart developed, in part, through personal experiences, New England lore, gossip and criticism in the media. While Martha fans are conflicted or adamant about not being a Martha Stewart fan, they are at least equally drawn to and knowledgeable about *Martha Stewart Living*. Martha fans are more likely to share their

interest in Stewart with others, yet their interest lies in critiquing Stewart the celebrity. To Martha fans, Martha Stewart is a provocation; they laugh and yell in reaction to the text. For Martha fans, Stewart and her texts are objects to be critiqued, and the critiques from Martha fans are, no doubt, part of what keeps *Living* fans silent about their interest in *Martha Stewart Living*. The draw for Martha fans, at least in part, is to deem Stewart, who positions herself as the ultimate authority on the domestic, questionable; as a result, the lifestyle advice she offers can be demeaned and ignored. The debate over Stewart's worth is thus an expression of the meanings tied up in Stewart's persona and in the messages of her media texts. These meanings are complex and the fan and anti-fan groups' positions on them are multifaceted. It is to the meanings that both *Living* and Martha fans make of Stewart and her texts as seen through the lenses of gender, sexuality, class and race that I turn next.

Gender: Femininity, Domesticity, and Women's Roles

On the questionnaire completed before each group interview began, I asked the respondents whether they considered themselves to be in support of women's rights, and whether they considered themselves to be a feminist. All but one of the thirty-eight participants responded that they did support women's rights; and twenty-three respondents considered themselves feminists. While the difference between the two questions may seem trivial, I suspected that identifying as a feminist would reveal a respondent's stake in a particular political affiliation with the struggle for women's rights, especially since the way the mainstream media used the term in the 1990s has increasingly associated it with female qualities deemed undesirable by many American women and men. The strength with which respondents claimed feminism contributed to

the positions fans took on the gendered messages produced by Martha Stewart's persona and her lifestyle suggestions, though the linkages were not always predictable.

The issues respondents discussed in the interviews circled around what women's lives are and should be like in the contemporary United States, with particular emphasis on the place of domesticity in women's lives. Repeatedly, Stewart's fans suggested the ways in which feminism and femininity are in tension, and demonstrated this tension with reference to the questions Stewart and her messages raised in their own lives. Peggy Orenstein (2000) traces this tension to a backlash that developed in the late 1980s, which tells women they "[can] not have it all' and should stop trying to do so;" this backlash was aimed squarely at feminist discourses that tell girls that they could be whatever they wanted to be (p. 3). The clash between these two ideologies, Orenstein argues, has left many women in a state of "flux" where "Old patterns and expectations have broken down, but new ideas seem fragmentary, unrealistic and often contradictory" (p. 5).

In what follows, I trace this state of flux through four main themes that emerged in my conversations with my female respondents. Each theme reveals the ways in which ideologies about gender affect women's cultural roles and responsibilities: nostalgia about women's roles in history, Stewart as a mother figure, the impact of Stewart's homekeeping suggestions on contemporary women's lives, and Stewart's own identity as a woman and "homekeeper." Predictably, *Living* and Martha fans took different positions on each of the four topic areas.

Stewart's focus on the domestic was important to many fans—indeed, fans' interests in cooking, decorating, gardening and crafting drew many of them to Stewart's texts. *Living* fans in particular reported a nostalgic longing that was provoked by images

in Stewart's magazine and television programs. Several participants linked Stewart's information and projects to women's roles and responsibilities in the home. Many *Living* fans longed for what they believed were simpler times, when women's main responsibility was the home. For example, for Kira, Stewart's crafts segments help her "appreciate that once upon a time, women actually sat around and sewed and didn't have to run out of the house and do sixty thousand errands and they lived a quieter kind of life." Karla's group discussed Stewart's knowledge and teaching as "women's legacy of work," which provoked this statement from Karla:

I actually grew up in a home where the women were still very involved in the crafting of a home. My aunt, for instance, was an extremely talented seamstress. My mother was a very good cook, and I also grew up in [a southern state], and so we were still canning, you know, it wasn't because it was cool, it was because it's what you did. So, that's interesting for me to think about a little bit more, so there's some nostalgic longing, I guess that gets satisfied for me, about seeing things in the magazine.

Importantly, many of the fans suggested that Stewart's media texts focus on aspects of women's culture and the domestic sphere that have been lost over time. Renee maintained that Stewart's messages are "just old, hometown old-fashioned, women stuff." Lauren described Stewart's messages as a "sort of tradition, or traditional values, whether you agree with them or not, as far as the holiday shows go and talking about family and making the cookies for the tree." Olivia reported that Stewart's texts evoke memories of "the Norman Rockwell time": "people were all at home over the hearth and there were more people around, you didn't have empty communities, no one was commuting." Barbara similarly offered that "one of the things I like about her the most is that she is continuing on with the niceties and the graciousness of a world that we are leaving behind." Hannah agreed that Stewart is "building an empire on common

knowledge that's been let go because, I don't know, the feminist movement, or because of women having to work or industrialization or something, that we've let go of a lot of these things."

Several respondents mentioned that recent US military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq made them feel a bit more nostalgic for what they suggested were easier times. Lane specifically referenced September 11, 2001, and the "huge nesting instinct" she developed shortly thereafter:

I think some of it with me was watching Martha teach people to do the things that my mom taught me in 1957, 8 and 9, that I thought, "oh yeah, doesn't everybody know how to do that?" And I started going back to baking, mostly just to prove to myself that I still could, and after 9/11, I was baking and sewing and recycling bits of clothing that we couldn't use any more and making door snakes, it's like the Susie homemaker thing.

The nostalgic longing expressed by my interviewees was noted by *New York's* Barbara Lippert in 1995, years before the tragedy of September 11th: "[Stewart] taps into a very obvious longing for lost ritual and tradition in this country.... Martha is the ritual healer" (p. 35). *The New Republic's* Margaret Talbot similarly suggested that:

In an era when it is not at all uncommon to be cut off from the traditional sources of motherwit and household lore—when many of us live far from the families into which we were born and have started our own families too late to benefit from the guidance of living parents or grandparents—domestic pedants like Martha Stewart rightly sense a big vacuum to fill. Stewart's books are saturated with nostalgia for lost tradition and old moldings.... (p. 32).

Next, I discuss how, for some of my respondents, this nostalgia turned Stewart into a sort of mother figure to which they could turn for advice.

It should come as no surprise that Stewart's fans' frequent references to nostalgia, easier times and the home led easily into discussions of Stewart as a mother figure. What was surprising, however, was the ways in which fans referenced Stewart as a surrogate

mother. The *Living* fans appreciated the knowledge Stewart offered to them, especially in cases where they did not learn what they felt they ought to know from their own mothers. The Martha fans responded to Stewart much as they reported relating to their own mothers—rebelliously.

Several of the women I interviewed, especially the ones in their twenties and thirties, indicated that, for them, Stewart serves as a kind of surrogate mother, teaching them domestic information that was not passed along from their own mothers, usually because their mothers worked outside the home. When I asked Fiona to describe Stewart's audience, she responded that she thinks Stewart's fans are "a younger generation and they haven't had the opportunity to be taught this stuff from their parents." Hailey described Stewart's information as lost domestic knowledge and a woman's "legacy;" she suggested that her grandmother knew this information, and must have passed it to Hailey's mother, but Hailey's mother did not pass it along to her:

It's also interesting to hear that different people here really did have the experience of having some of this stuff taught to them when they were younger, because I surely did not. You know, my mother didn't care if you folded a towel or if you threw it on the floor. I'm definitely more of a homemaker than my mom. Yeah, and it's funny because I never thought I would be, when I had a vision of growing up, it didn't include having a specific way to fold towels or anything like that at all, but I also have kind of come to it on my own terms, it's been nice not to have the pressure to have to do it, but to want to, as I've gotten older.

Rachel suggested that because women now have more possibilities for their work lives, Martha Stewart, and sources like her media texts, developed and are successful because working women, and the daughters of working women, feel they need information about domestic activities:

Women do have more options now, to do career, and whatever the heck they want to do. If they want to stay at home they can stay at home, fine, but we can find just as many women not wanting to stay home, which shouldn't, which isn't

looked down upon, because you find, at least from what I perceive, you find that more the case that more women are less at home and out or working. I see this more as an industry to help them maintain that connection back to the home. I know for myself, I can say that that is totally true because my mom taught me how to cook a little bit, but like for the most part, my mom was a stay at home parent and she cooked all our meals and stuff and it wasn't until I went away to school and I had to do that myself, and where did I turn to? A lot of these shows, or books.

Just as the *Living* fans were drawn to Stewart as a surrogate mother figure who could teach them domestic knowledge, some of the Martha fans, who were more critical of Stewart, expressed irritation with Stewart in part through references to difficult relationships within their own family structures. Olivia described Stewart as “a weird mother figure type that you can't live up to” and explained her reaction through her relationship to her own mother:

Maybe that was my relationship with my mother or something, I mean it's like, boy, it's sort of, it's kind of soothing, like she's the mom, she kind of knows, she's totally in control of everything and I'm just watching and I'm learning from the mother hen or whatever, but then I don't know, it just, you just come up empty again if you're not doing all of that stuff.

At one point in our discussion, Maribel exclaimed “if you knew my mother, you'd understand why I hate Martha Stewart.” This statement referred back to Maribel's rather strong statement about herself in her introduction to the group:

I'm a slob. I have excellent taste and don't particularly care about using it because I grew up in a family that was somewhat on the Martha Stewart side in terms of being about caring about appearances and it was in that process that I became fat and not giving a shit about appearances [sic.], so personally I think Martha Stewart can go blow.

Bethany, who was less familiar with Stewart's texts than her public persona, described Stewart as “snobbish,” “uppity,” and “uptight about what people think about her.” She explained that while she may be interested in some of the tasks that Stewart undertakes, Stewart's persona is the “opposite of what I want to do with myself.” Bethany suggested

that she resists Stewart because she reminds Bethany of her family: “the people that raised me that I despise, she’s their queen.”

Inherent in both fan groups’ responses to Stewart as a mother figure is a tug-of-war between traditional and contemporary ideologies about women’s roles, particularly for the younger participants whose mothers worked outside the home. Raised with female models who prioritized paid work over work inside the home, some of these younger women, in their drive to “have it all,” now feel that they want to have the domestic knowledge their mothers did not teach them. Peggy Orenstein (2000), found a similar pull between traditional and contemporary ideologies in her interviews with over two hundred American women: “In their professional lives, their personal lives, and their dreams of the future, young women face a series of interlocking dilemmas, a dizzying combination of external obstacles and internal contradictions that push them simultaneously toward autonomy and dependence, modernity and tradition” (p. 40). As I describe in the next section, these obstacles and contradictions often produce a sense of pressure to perform domestically.

Connected to Martha fans’ disdain for Stewart as an authoritative figure who doles out information about domestic tasks is the pressure many Martha fans described feeling after watching or reading Stewart’s lifestyle suggestions. These fans argued that the roles and responsibilities Stewart suggests fall squarely on the shoulders of women. Not following Stewart’s advice—or not achieving the same end result when taking Stewart’s advice—was a source of stress to many Martha fans. For example, Emily remarked that she feels that not taking Stewart’s advice reflects poorly on her identity: “I dearly love Martha, I think she’s fabulous. But I’m actually pretty ambivalent about her

too, I don't like the message a lot of times or the pressure you feel afterwards and if you can't do what she's doing or you're not willing to cut the end of your whisk off so you can make sponge sugar confection cookies what does that say about you as a person?" Olivia revealed that she feels "inadequate" when she watches or reads Stewart's offerings. When the women in her group questioned her about her feelings, she replied: "how can it be humanly possible to do all that? And I am, my type is to be a perfectionist, that's how I am anyway, so it's really a problem of mine coming out when I watch her."

While some *Living* fans did report feeling the pressure Martha fans described, they suggested that they relieved it by recognizing that Stewart's circumstances are much different than their own, a point I return to later in this chapter. Mary, for example, revealed the way she keeps Stewart's messages in perspective:

I think sometimes when you watch her, it's hard to keep it in perspective that "oh, you have a full-time job you dummy, you have a life, you don't have ten gardeners and somebody to clean your house and walk the dogs and bathe the cat, you're doing it all yourself so you can't do everything she shows you in a show even though she makes you feel should be doing those things.

Barbara shared that she feels little pressure from Stewart because she knows Stewart has help: "but why should you feel inadequate, I mean, you don't have to do it all, she's not doing it all by herself either." Karla, who conveyed quite a bit of anxiety over failed attempts to live like Stewart, recounted that it was liberating that Stewart had a large staff to help her complete her tasks: "It was very important for me when I finally realized that she has an incredible staff and she didn't do all of this by herself and as smart as I sometimes think I, I mean, I didn't get it at first, and I really couldn't understand why I couldn't do these things."

Other *Living* fans similarly insisted that they pick and choose the projects that they want to undertake and do not feel guilt or pressured when they disregard Stewart's suggestions. Renee explained her strategy simply: "Take what you can use and leave the rest." Max suggested that Stewart includes numerous and challenging tasks only to keep the interest of her audience: "I think she's smart enough to know that most people like a challenge. If she did everything I could do, there'd be no point to watching her." Barbara similarly suggested that she does not believe it is Stewart's intention that her audience completes each and every task on her shows and in her publications:

She has a lot to offer on her show, and if you only take away one thing you want to do or write it down or store and use it at a later date, I like doing those things, I don't always have the time, but sometimes I make the time. She doesn't want you to do every single thing on her show, she shows you lots of stuff, if you only do one in every fifth show, that's just a gift to me.

Though Maribel did not personally feel pressured by Stewart's ideas, she was adamant in her belief that Stewart "takes advantage" of women whom Maribel feels are already frazzled from trying to "make their way" in the contemporary United States; in Maribel's view, these women are already stressed out from juggling many roles and responsibilities and Stewart's suggestions only add additional pressure. She believes Stewart draws on 1950s ideology to convince them that the home is women's true domain:

Martha Stewart speaks back really to "Nifty Fifties" kind of homemaker ideas and orderliness and cleanliness, partly because I think she's appealing to people who were never a part of that system. If you think about it, feminism in the sixties and seventies largely consisted of women who were engaged in [domestic] life, they rebelled against it, they had a different set of values that they established and then a new generation of people came in, trying to figure out whether or not that identity was right for them. And Martha Stewart, in a sense, is appealing to *that* community of people, daughters of these women, who are wondering, "Was it worth it, going through what my mothers went through, given that I still don't have equal rights, I still am having issues with abortion, I still can't find adequate

child care, I still can't get all of these things that my mother said I was going to have? So, maybe I should go back and consider what I can have control over, which is the home, which is what men have been telling me and which, is what my mothers rebelled against and failed."

Maribel's suggestion that Stewart's fans are grappling with conflicts in their identities and values was strengthened by many of my female respondents who did indeed suggest that Stewart's messages were out of touch with their lives, particularly in terms of their available time for projects like Stewart's and their prior commitments. As aforementioned, many of the interviewees stressed that they would like to have more time. Martha fans, in particular, reported that their time is taken up by work, children, and managing a home. Olivia explained that Stewart's ideas just do not work with her lifestyle: "I don't have time to wrap my old cheese in cheesecloth. You know, I've got kids, [Stewart's suggestions] just makes me laugh. It makes me start to chuckle." Janice expressed frustration that Stewart does not seem to acknowledge her audience's everyday challenges, especially in relation to Stewart's seemingly privileged life: "I think she can make us women and many women feel inadequate that we aren't doing it all and how many hours in the day and how many challenges do each of us have that she doesn't have?" Jackie indicated that she is frustrated with Stewart's perceived assumptions about women's lives:

She really assumes that people, that women, have all the time in the world. I'm thinking, "that woman needs to get a life," you know, I mean, there's this whole world out there and there are just things out there that are more relevant to my life than organizing my linens. When she talks about homemakers, there's an assumption that women are at home and they have lots of leisure.

At issue in the question of whether Stewart's messages are meant (and/or received) as helpful suggestions or authoritative commands is the roles of women in the contemporary United States and the place of and perception of domesticity in US culture.

As Maribel referenced above, Stewart's messages of domesticity do conflict with the sharp changes in women's roles—namely women's entrance into the workforce.

Margaret Talbot underscores this point in her critique of Martha Stewart: "Though she may not directly admonish women to abandon careers for hearth and home, Stewart certainly exalts a way of life that puts hearth and home at its center, one that would be virtually impossible to achieve without somebody's full-time devotion" (p. 32). Though domesticity, or working inside the home, has never been highly valued in US culture, the contemporary emphasis on women's education, success in the working world, and independence has in many ways further diminished and degraded the work undertaken inside the home. Stewart's message speaks to women who work outside the home, who work inside the home, and who straddle both worlds; Stewart emphasizes the importance of the home, a message of great comfort to *Living* fans.

In line with *Living* fans' appreciation of and focus on Stewart's texts, respondents like Candace argued that Stewart's messages do not create new domestic tasks for which women should be responsible, they instead give a new respect to work that women already do: "I think society has kind of taken an importance away from the home and making the home a nice place to be and a comfortable place and the value of a homemaker and I think she's kind of restored that somewhat." Hannah agreed that Stewart has brought greater respect to women's work: "she takes the womanly arts, or whatever you want to call it, homekeeping and homemaking, and has really elevated it to a higher standing than I felt it was when I was a young woman growing up." Dara disclosed that she feels like there is a perception that there is something "anti-feminist about being home centered." Wynne described a similar notion and argued that feminism

has made women feel as though they can no longer enjoy domesticity; she believes Stewart is an important figure because she demonstrates that women can both work and enjoy “homekeeping”:

I think with the shift in gender roles, where women have to feel as though they’re empowered, they feel the need to toss away everything that used to be considered feminine, which is why I like how she’s like an icon of, because I think people who sit at home and do housework might feel as though they shouldn’t be there because of all the social stigma about if you’re at home you’re obviously dumb, and you’re obviously this and that, and, so in that sense I think [Martha Stewart as an icon] is really great because, you know women who are at home can feel, like she’s kind of a symbol of someone who made [that] choice.

For all of the respondents’ comments about the importance of Stewart’s emphasis on domesticity and their construction of Stewart as a mother figure, they were particularly judgmental of Stewart’s own ability to measure up as a “homekeeper.” In fact, Stewart’s status as a successful businesswoman who constructs herself as the ultimate homemaker proved confusing to many, blurring the well-enforced lines between femininity and masculinity and public and private.

For example, Martha fans, like Nadia, maintained that they only thought of Stewart as a businesswoman, not a homemaker: “I don’t consider her a homemaker at all, because she is a businesswoman, she had the luxury of being a homemaker and the luxury of going into this.” Rachel’s image of Stewart the businesswoman is so strong that she finds Stewart’s television attire “strange”: “whenever she’s doing the home stuff, it just seems really funny, I just can’t picture her. It just seems really forced that she’s wearing a denim shirt, wearing a ponytail.” Dianne revealed that she finds it difficult to take domestic advice from a successful businesswoman:

It seems completely backwards that a successful woman would try and teach women to be more like women, because, obviously nobody can do this if they have a career and a life and it’s almost like she’s telling you “you should stay

home and dedicate yourself to designing your house and your garden and cooking meals.”

In contrast, for many *Living* fans, Stewart’s success as a businesswoman was a source of great pride. Grace was quick to note that Stewart started her catering business when she was a stay-at-home-mom. Grace, also a stay-at-home-mom, believes that Stewart has made a business out of something she and her friends do all of the time: sharing their ideas. Dara called Stewart “a hell of an entrepreneur” and Pamela argued that Stewart “is a brilliant businesswoman.” In discussing Stewart’s perceived multiple talents, Barbara sang Stewart’s praises, “I don’t know a lot of women who can make a tray, and run a skill saw, run a circular saw and she runs them herself, I mean I think that’s a lot more than most women are able to do in the nineties.”

Because many of Stewart’s fans saw her as a businesswoman and not a homekeeper, reconciling Stewart’s domestic knowledge and her business acumen was difficult for most fans. For both *Living* and *Martha* fans, Stewart’s media messages were about domesticity and women’s work, but Stewart, the expert producer of these messages, was anything but feminine. The disdain that even *Living* fans expressed when evaluating Stewart’s own femininity may help to explain why *Living* fans so readily distance themselves from Stewart’s persona. Fans’ judgments of Stewart’s lack of femininity is not particularly surprising, given that US culture frequently constructs successful and powerful women as unfeminine or masculine (see Anderson, 1998). That this stereotype still resonates in US culture is clear in the respondents’ evaluation of Stewart’s femininity in terms of her persona, her appearance and her personal life.

Both fan groups’ descriptions of Stewart’s persona and appearance suggest that they believe Stewart, unlike her texts, fails to demonstrate traditional and fundamental

characteristics of femininity. In fact, many fans described Stewart as demonstrating masculine traits. For example, Pamela suggested that only Stewart's message is feminine, while Dara argued that Stewart's "stage presence" is "very masculine and aggressive." Katie described Stewart as "giving the impression of a woman," but stressed that she believes Stewart has "a man's mind." When I pressed her on what she meant, she explained: "she can make decisions very easily, without regard to the consequence of touchy-feely-sensitive, who she's going to run over when she does it. That's why she's such a good businesswoman, she can make those decisions and just move ahead."

While other fans did not specifically reference masculinity to describe Stewart, they did use descriptions that suggested that Stewart's persona did not match her domestic messages. Lane described Stewart as "not very warm," and Jenny suggested that Stewart is "very hard" and "stern." Dianne expressed frustration with Stewart's lack of warmth:

She comes across as such a cold fish, she's such a know-it-all, I hate people like that. And I think her affect is very flat, she's very, she doesn't laugh and get excited about things, or it's just, whether she's talking about cooking, or gardening or folding sheets, it's usually all the same, she doesn't laugh, she doesn't get all excited about things.

Respondents were no more kind when discussing Stewart's appearance. Almost all of the fans I interviewed commented that they disliked Stewart's hair. For Sarah, Stewart's hair is "almost always a mess," and Dianne commented that Stewart's hair is "all in her eyes, it's terrible." Catherine revealed that one of her "big problems" with Stewart is her hair; she laments that Stewart can afford "the good styles" but "cannot get it right."

Some fans were also critical of Stewart's dress. Karla maintained that "for someone who has so much style, [Stewart] has no fashion sense whatsoever at all." Pamela reported that Stewart is "always wearing loose fitting blouses, usually denim, oversized khakis." Barbara similarly asserted that Stewart is: "always in something hanging over a pair of pants, probably a \$500 silk shirt, but I think in many places she should be dressing a lot more elegantly than she is."

For other fans, Stewart's clothing is distinctly unfeminine. Sarah stated that Stewart "dresses like a boy," and Dianne asserted that Stewart "must be shopping from the men's department." Isabel described Stewart as "very manly" and added that Stewart "kind of looks like she would be gay."

Stewart's lack of femininity has also been noted by cultural critics like Camille Paglia, who describes Stewart as "a self-complete man/woman.... She exudes something sexually ambiguous" (qtd. in Lippert, 1995, p. 31). Shirley Wajda (2001) suggests that because Stewart is "at one and the same time a homemaker and a CEO," she "crosses traditional gender boundaries" (p. 77). That Stewart fails to embody all that is feminine seems to be reinforced by the stories respondents told about Stewart's personal life. For some, Stewart's emphasis on the home seems odd considering she is divorced and her daughter is grown. For example, this exchange between Olivia and Candace reflects common discussions in each small group interview about Stewart's role in her divorce and the supposedly strained relationship she has with her daughter:

Olivia: She's been sort of questionable about her relations with her family members, too. Like her daughter. Yeah, didn't she get into this, she didn't bring her up really, they had one child and Martha was just, she's just very ambitious and I think she kind of put the business ahead of her daughter and didn't spend time with her.

Candace: Apparently her husband too, they say.

Olivia: Yeah, are they married?

Candace: He left her for a younger woman, secretary or something and then she went on a tirade after that.

Participants frequently blamed Stewart's personality for the failure of her marriage. Dianne, for example, expressed empathy for Stewart's ex-husband: "It's not surprising that she's divorced. I couldn't marry that woman." Emily suggested that Stewart's supposedly obsessive behaviors drove Andy Stewart "insane and made him leave the marriage." Then Emily and Mary jokingly mimicked Stewart's treatment of her former husband:

Mary: You can't get into bed, I'm still ironing the sheets.

Emily: What are you doing? Slippers go here! Do you see the diagram, put them in the outline.

Kira summarized many participants' feelings about Stewart's personal life in a reference to a Kmart commercial that shows Martha Stewart in bed, enjoying her Martha Stewart Everyday linens; she argues that the "domestic bliss" display is a reality women "hope and pray for," but she points out that as the ad shows Stewart in the middle of what everyone supposedly wants, "she's sleeping alone." Katie discussed how in a Thanksgiving episode of *Martha Stewart Living*, Stewart had only nieces and nephews around her Thanksgiving table. Watching the episode, Katie felt "conscious that there's that a real lack of family there." Likewise Dianne insisted that Stewart "doesn't have anybody that she's cooking meals for except for her friends at dinner parties."

Though most fans agreed that Stewart's message is feminine, but her persona and appearance are not, they argued that they would respect Stewart less and be less

interested in her texts if she appeared and acted more feminine. Grace suggested that if Stewart were perfect physically, she would be more daunting: “I think we would be intimidated, well kind of, if she dressed like J. Lo while showing us how to fold our fitted sheets.” Dara agreed: “Yeah. We can’t handle perfection in *every* room of the house. Wink. Wink.”

Dianne concluded that Stewart’s lack of overt femininity bolsters Stewart’s credibility: “If she was a real girly girl, I would laugh at her more. I don’t think she’d be taken as seriously in general just because women like that often aren’t especially interested in things about more male-oriented topics, like maybe gardening or refinishing furniture.” Jenny indicated that she believed Stewart’s personality traits bolstered her success; if Stewart were different, Jenny would think less of her: “I think that she needed that strength and that harshness to get where she is, but honestly, because I’ve got such a, a vision of her in my head, I couldn’t picture her softer, you know what I mean? Actually, I think I’d be kind of disappointed in her if she was I’d be, ‘this is an act.’” Rachel similarly suggested that if Stewart were softer she would no longer be taken seriously; she would instead be a “joke.”

The respondents’ often harsh criticisms of Stewart clearly frame the double binds contemporary American women face at the turn of the twenty-first century. Stewart’s magazines and television programs encourage women to be both domestic and successful outside the home. These fans ultimately judged Martha Stewart, who leads a life quite different from the one advised by her media texts, with the conflicting and contradictory messages about femininity found in *Martha Stewart Living*.

The positions *Living* and Martha fans took in the discussion of nostalgia for assumedly easier times for women, Stewart as a mother figure, Stewart's impact on contemporary notions of "women's work," and Stewart's own identity as a woman and "homekeeper" suggest that a tension between femininity and feminism is a fundamental component of many contemporary American women's lives. *Living* fans saw Stewart as a mother figure who both preserves and shares women's domestic knowledge; Martha fans saw Stewart as a judgmental mother figure whom they could never please. *Living* fans took comfort from the images of domesticity in Stewart's texts, while Martha fans found Stewart's ideas and suggestions oppressive. Though *Living* fans took pride in Stewart's success, both fan groups chided Stewart for not being properly feminine. Connecting Stewart's lack of femininity to her business success, most fans suggested that Stewart's lack of femininity bolsters her expert status—without it they would not trust her information as willingly.

How fans reacted to Stewart's persona and media messages suggests, in part, the role of domesticity in their own lives. Domestic pleasures and responsibilities still play a large role in women's lives, yet with so many additional responsibilities, many of the respondents struggled with how their lives could accommodate traditional women's roles—and this struggle played out in their evaluations of Martha Stewart. Additionally, that respondents rebuked Stewart for not acting as feminine as her suggestions, yet maintained that they would not take her as seriously if she were more feminine, indicates that the meanings of femininity and feminism, and the roles US women can and should play in US society, remain unsettled.

Sexuality

Discussion about gender resurfaced when I asked participants to describe Stewart's audience to me. White, middle-class, college-educated housewives were first on the list, and every group I spoke to but one listed gay men next. Pamela insisted that "every gay man I know *loves* her," and Jenny emphasized that gay men "Love, love, love her! Love, love, love her!"

The mostly heterosexual, mostly female respondents' explanations for gay men's likely interest in Stewart varied. When I asked why they suggested gay men were an integral part of Stewart's audience, Karla and Sarah together constructed an explanation:

Karla: Why? Because of their desire to live like that.

Sarah: Yeah. Beautiful home, having the money ...

Karla: Hosting and all that kind of stuff, the image, yeah the image.

Dianne offered that gay men enjoy Stewart "probably because men aren't supposed to pay attention to those sorts of things, so if you're gay you're already crossing enough boundaries that it means you're just free to do whatever you want, and you can obsess about the little things like that, you can throw fabulous parties."

Some respondents, like Barbara, offered their personal experiences with gay men as support or evidence for their assumptions about Stewart's audience: "[Stewart's] a perfectionist and they're very creative, I worked with a large group of them for a couple summers actually, they're very creative, they're detail people, they like doing that type of nicety." Emily shared a story of a gay couple she knew who were "faithful" Stewart fans and despite the fact that she felt their devotion was occasionally "over the top," she asserted: "they loved it, and they were such perfectionists, they were architects, and every

little detail was just beautiful, every party they threw was wonderful.” Janice also reported that she has gay friends and speculated about their potential interest in Stewart: “I can picture them respecting her because they do respect strong women and there’s probably more of an allegiance to her from that department than we realize.”

Personal experience aside, most of the female interviewees relied on stereotypical notions of gay men as feminine to explain their interest in Martha Stewart and her texts. When I asked the group of gay men I interviewed to explain their own attraction to Stewart and the cultural perception that gay men would be Stewart’s fans, they had two main answers. Tom’s initial response was quite similar to the women’s responses given above and referenced gay men’s supposed drive for perfection: “I think there tends to be that perfection gene in gay men, too, and that’s being stereotypical, but you know, it may be one thing that we all focus on.” Aaron’s response, like Janice’s above, referenced the significance of strong women in gay male culture and suggested that Stewart’s persona is a draw for gay men:

She kind of, she has that diva quality or something and gay men for whatever reason always respond to that, like Bette Davis or Joan Crawford, you know women that are very talented, and for whatever reason gay men seem to be drawn to that, I don’t know why, it’s a strange phenomenon. I don’t remember ever talking to anybody about Martha Stewart and I just suddenly started watching her and I got hooked on her and then found out well, she’s a big gay icon and I don’t know why.

When I pressed the group to further explain gay men’s attraction to Martha Stewart, Tom explained that he connects with Stewart’s desire to cast off her New Jersey working class roots and raise her class status:

It’s not only what she does, it’s who she is too, and I think a lot of gay men had to act and calculate the way they are perceived, and as you get old, now I don’t give a crap what people think, but I remember taking a speech class, I remember going

through all that stuff and I think she's obviously done that too. So I think there's an identity link there somehow, where we relate to that.

Though Aaron can't quite seem to put his finger on the reason he believes Stewart has an iconic status for gay men, his statements suggest that gay men's interest in Stewart is similar to Richard Dyer's (1986) analysis of Judy Garland's importance to gay male subculture after 1950. Through the examination of letters and published articles about Garland, Dyer suggests that although clearly heterosexual, Garland resonated with a gay sensibility, which was characterized by intensity, irony, theatricality, and authenticity. From his analysis, Dyer highlights the degree to which Garland's expression of strong emotion that was the result of public suffering and strength, and Garland's perseverance despite adversity, resonated with man gay men. Further, Dyer argues that Garland's appeal to gay men derived from three specific characteristics of her work: ordinariness, androgyny and camp.

Although Martha Stewart is unquestionably different from Judy Garland, their lives are similar in that public revelations about their private lives altered the meaning of their public personas. Garland's "all-American, girl-next-door image" (Dyer, 1986, p. 156) was shattered with reports of her troubled home life and suicide attempt; Stewart's image has been repeatedly battered with reports that she stole other's ideas, was abusive to those around her, and lied to investigators of the ImClone scandal. Aspects of Stewart's ordinariness, androgyny, and camp are discussed below in my respondents' descriptions of Stewart's appearance, and "over the top" ideas. Dyer's work suggests that gay men's identification with Judy Garland consisted of a connection with her personal struggles; Tom's comment above indicates a similar connection exists between gay men and Martha Stewart.

Whether fans were *Living* or Martha fans mattered less in this area of discussion, though the gay men I interviewed were less connected to Stewart's ideas than her persona. That they were part Martha fans and part *Living* fans may explain why they were not hesitant to assert their interest in Stewart. Their identities as men who are gay gave them the opportunity to partake of Stewart's domestic ideas without feeling the pressure that many of the heterosexual women I spoke to expressed that they felt. These men articulated an interest in some of Stewart's ideas, and some experience using them in their own lives, yet they emphasized feeling connected to Stewart as a public figure through her interests, her persona and the challenges she has faced in her life.

Like my female respondents, I too, assumed gay men to be an important component of Stewart's audience. However, in searching for gay male fans of Stewart (particularly on online listservs for gay communities), I repeatedly received responses from lesbian women—an audience group I did not anticipate, nor did I initially seek.² Due to the significant response I received from lesbian Martha Stewart fans, I organized and conducted a small group interview with a group of lesbians.

One of the interview participants, Sarah, was just as surprised as I was that Stewart has a resonance for lesbian women. She expected, based on my original online postings for participants, that she would be the only lesbian in a group of gay men discussing Martha Stewart and was shocked to meet other lesbians for whom Stewart is important. Toward the end of the group interview, she reiterated her shock at meeting a number of lesbians interested in Martha Stewart and insisted: "I don't know anybody who's into her." Partners Hannah and Hailey were quick to confirm that they had many

lesbian friends with whom they discussed Stewart. As she left the meeting, Sarah shared that: “I have a whole different idea now of the Martha Stewart lesbians.”

The lesbian women I interviewed enjoyed Stewart for many of the same reasons heterosexual women did, although in the pilot study interview, Barbara questioned whether lesbian women would enjoy Stewart’s messages. Emily, a lesbian, responded that her interest in Stewart was much more like the interest of the heterosexual women in her interview group than that of gay men (or at least the reasons the group supposed gay men would like Stewart): “you’re still women and you’re still expected to keep your house a certain way. My sister is straight and she says unabashedly she has two standards of cleanliness: she walks into a man’s house, it’s tolerable as long as there is a path through the house, you know? But if she walks into a woman’s house”

In many ways, gender played a crucial role in the discussion of gay men and lesbians as Stewart’s audience members. Heterosexual women and lesbian women assumed gay men would be interested Stewart fans because of their interest in things traditionally feminine. The gay men I interviewed echoed this idea. The lesbians I interviewed stressed that, unlike some of the heterosexual women who had expressed that they felt pressure to complete Stewart’s domestic tasks, they felt less pressure in part because becoming a lesbian-identified woman meant breaking with many feminine ideals. Hannah, in particular, suggested that a lesbian identity, constructed against heteronormativity, could help to counter the pressure:

I don’t feel the pressure to make the house the same way because I really had to break away from all that pressure from my family, because when I came out as a lesbian, I really broke a lot of ties and have continued to break ties because I’m a lesbian and because we’re [she and Hailey] married, now we don’t talk to them anymore and so Martha doesn’t pressure me to be more like that and I’m actually coming to my own embracing of the feminine qualities, with knitting and stuff

like that, on my own terms now and so I just find her to be useful, more than anything. I feel no pressure to make my house like hers.

Hailey expressed a similar sentiment:

On a personal level, I don't know that I feel so much of the, I don't know that I feel so much of the kind of tear and the strain of trying to balance, you know, home and career and family in the same way, that maybe I would if I was straight or maybe I would if I had children, those sorts of things. For me it's kind of like, "oh! I can pick the things that I like," the other stuff, you know, we cut it up and put it in a collage card, whatever, it's not such a big deal.

As Hailey continued, she raised another interesting point that was quickly confirmed by the others in this interview group: Stewart often uses gender neutral terms when discussing for whom, if anyone, readers and viewers will be completing Stewart's proposed tasks. For Hailey, Stewart's vagueness helps her to avoid feeling pressured by Stewart's suggestions. By refraining from mentioning husbands and/or children as the presumed recipients of Stewart's knowledge, Stewart's texts open viewing positions for those without husbands and/or children. For a number of members in this group, Stewart's texts are inclusive:

Hailey: That is something I've come to appreciate about the magazine in particular, because Martha doesn't really say "oh, you know, for your husband, you should be doing blah, blah blah."

Lane: That's the truth!

Karla: You do it for yourself!

Hailey: You should be doing blah, blah, blah, she talks about it, you do it for yourself and you do it, if you want, for people you care about, for your guests, whatever. It's inclusive.

The beneficiaries of the projects audiences might undertake was not the only important opening in Stewart's texts that interviewees pointed out. Two interviewees suggested that the lack of a husband or children in Stewart's texts, when combined with

Stewart's public persona, could suggest that Stewart is a lesbian. Isabel mentioned her theory only in a passing reference to her judgment of Stewart's femininity. However, Sarah, one of the most outspoken Martha fans, disclosed a finely developed theory about Stewart's sexuality and maintained that she watches Stewart's television show in part to test her theory. Sarah insisted that she had strong evidence to support her suspicions, and the information she offered as evidence caused quite a stir among the other women in her interview group:

Alright, alright, here's the deal. Sharon Patrick, her head executive, they met on this mountaineering trip, and after that happened, I read an article in *Business Week* about Sharon Patrick, and apparently they have, or at least at the time of the article, which is a few years ago now, they, these two women, they had their desks in the same office face-to-face, they worked together at all hours, they practically, if not maybe, lived together, and I heard from a friend of mine, who is one of these who knows somebody who knows somebody or something like that, they were pretty sure she was [a lesbian]. And if you read the book *Just Desserts* there was a Caribbean cruise that David Geffen had put on and it was all gay people and she was there and she's not out, and so I just think that's pretty fascinating, she's never been hooked up with anybody since her marriage.

When I asked the other group members if they had ever heard a rumor about Stewart's sexuality Karla replied: "I've listened for one and tried to start them." Lane exclaimed: "Oh, I'd love it if it were true." Hailey indicated that she had not heard the rumor, but "always thought so."

Intrigued by their suspicions, I asked the group to explain their reasoning. They worked together to answer my question:

Hannah: The khaki pants, the shirts.

Sarah: Yeah, even when she's doing the laundry, she's wearing like this, plaid shirt. She looks like a dyke to me!

Karla: And when she dresses up she looks like she's in drag! She does! She looks so funny!

Hannah: And she has multiple cats!

Hailey: She hangs around with all of these gay men.

The group's evidence for Stewart's undisclosed lesbian identity aligns with Alexander Doty's (1995) assertion that "lesbian viewers have always negotiated their own culturally specific readings and pleasures" (p. 81) in media texts (see, for example, D'acci, 1994). Stewart's texts leave just enough openness to allow audiences to produce what Doty describes as "queer readings" which he stresses "aren't 'alternative' readings, wishful or willful misreadings, or 'reading too much into things....'" (p. 84). Instead, queer readings are built upon textual qualities that Doty argues have always been in popular culture.

Clearly, the elements in *Martha Stewart Living*, at least for these readers, involve Stewart's perceived masculinity, or lack of femininity. However, instead of linking Stewart's lack of femininity to her success in the business world (as many heterosexual interviewees did), these participants rearticulate Stewart's traits (based in large part on stereotypes) to suggest that she is a lesbian. That Stewart might be a lesbian has been a reason for Sarah to watch *Martha Stewart Living*, and many other women in this interview group suggested that a lesbian identification with Stewart would strengthen their relationship to Stewart and her texts.

In sum, discussions of Martha Stewart's persona and media texts, in reference to sexuality, centered less around whether fans were *Living* or Martha fans, and focused more on stereotypes and breaks from traditional roles. My interviewees described gay men as an important component of Stewart's audience in part because of gay men's assumed interest in the realm of the feminine, especially the domestic arts. Similarly,

many interviewees did not imagine that lesbians would be interested in Stewart's messages because of the stereotypical association of lesbians with masculinity.

Both gay men and lesbians explained their interest in Stewart as connected to the breaks they had to make with traditional notions in the process of claiming their own sexual identifications. Gay men articulated a connection to Stewart through a need to act as something they are not. Lesbians suggested that an earlier break with traditional notions of femininity allowed them to appreciate Stewart and her ideas on their own terms. Fans reported that Stewart as an icon plays an important role in gay male culture, and that Stewart's lack of visible femininity opens up the possibility to "read" her as a lesbian. That gay and lesbian fans could appropriate Stewart through the lens of sexuality proved to be an important aspect of these fans' interests in Martha Stewart and her media texts. Next, I turn to fans' discussions about race.

Race: Whiteness and Ethnicity

Race contributes to both the meanings fans make of *Martha Stewart Living* and how they imagine the audience members Stewart's texts draw. Interviewees imagined Stewart's audience to be mostly white, in part because the images in Stewart's texts were mostly of white people and most of Stewart's recipes lacked marked ethnic influence. *Living* fans appreciated Stewart's attempt to include stories on non-white cultures, while Martha fans found Stewart's efforts offensive. Many suggested that Stewart's own racial identification aligned with her class status to bolster her credibility on the topic of taste. A number of participants saw Stewart not as white, but as Polish; her Polish heritage resonated with some fans' Polish backgrounds and these fans particularly enjoyed references to Polish culture in Stewart's texts.

While most fans noticed the ways in which Stewart's texts are structured to appeal more to whites than non-whites (in differing degrees—mostly through representation of white models, European-centered recipes, and Stewart's perceived discomfort with non-white guests), the *Living* fans were more likely to overlook the bias to enjoy the information contained in Stewart's texts. For these fans, white feels normal; in Richard Dyer's (1997) words, these fans assume that "whites are not of a certain race, they're just the human race (p. 3). The Martha fans, on the other hand, took pleasure in exposing whiteness and continued to read and watch *Martha Stewart Living* to witness the offense again and again. Maribel, a self-described "channel clicker," noted that she always stops on Stewart's television program when she has a guest, especially a guest of color. For Maribel, it is in these moments that "you can really see that whole whiteness up against the rest of the world."

When asked to describe the racial identity of Stewart's average audience members, the interviewees once again were in agreement: they believe Stewart's audience members are mostly white. When I inquired about possible non-white viewers, Pamela replied that she is "sure [Stewart] has appeal to non-white women." Renee said "of course" non-whites were watching, but "only a very small handful." Dara added, a "much smaller number." Maribel suggested that recent immigrants to the US might be watching:

Ones who have come who are already professionals, like for example people from Asia, or people who had already established careers and then tried to reestablish themselves in the United States for whatever reason, trying to find that definition of what it means to be American, and Martha Stewart has a convenient package of that definition.

Nadia, who is South Asian, confirmed Maribel's suggestion: "We were an immigrant family, my parents came here. I learned how to cook American food, I got cook books and I started baking and grocery shopping and then I watch[ed] Martha Stewart." Nadia indicated that she was not particularly interested in being "like an American," but has acculturated over time because "this is the place I happened to grow up." She emphasized that she would turn to Martha Stewart when she needed to know about American cooking and suggested that Stewart could offer advice on, for example, "the perfect batch of chocolate chip cookies."

When I asked the respondents to explain why they believe Stewart appeals mostly to white women, they referenced Stewart's texts. Pamela suggested that Stewart's message is "pretty white-bread." Isabel replied, "All of the people in the magazines are white and none of [Stewart's] recipes appeal to the Southern cooking [*sic.*], mostly mid-west and northeast, which are not too populated with minorities." Dara offered that there are "no ethnic minorities anywhere on her shows, magazines, etcetera." However, Dara and Pamela did discuss an issue of *Martha Stewart Living* that, in Pamela's words was "a real nice spread on Harlem." Dara agreed, but suggested that it "was a first."

Wynne and Maribel discussed the content of Stewart's television program. While they both indicated that the program does include what might be called "multicultural programming," Wynne maintained: "I don't think that attracts different races to watch her show. I think she definitely just caters to white America." Maribel agreed:

Yeah, I think that's true. Because why would she bother to go through these educational segments with different cultures and stuff if she knew she was speaking to a demographic that would have something to say about it? Because she, the way she packages them is not, she's not assuming a dialogue here.

Many of the non-white women with whom I spoke described the ways in which Stewart's messages both represented and diluted their ethnic and racial heritages. For example, a common topic was the lack of spice in Stewart's recipes. Maribel, who is multiracial, suggested that when she sees Stewart's recipes, "I'm like, 'there ain't no cayenne in that.'" Rachel, who is Filipino, maintained that even though she enjoyed Stewart's ideas, she did not find Stewart's recipes particularly useful:

I find with Martha, she does do a little bit of ethnic stuff, it's just a little bit. It's like, "I'll teach you how to make the egg roll, but a low fat alternative," but you know the egg roll is not meant to be that way. Or you know, or "we'll teach you how to make Indian food, Tandoori chicken, but this has less sodium." I mean it wasn't meant to be that way, so it's just taking little snippets here and it's why I think some people of color wouldn't identify with her magazine.

Both respondents' observations about Stewart's use of ethnic recipes fall in line with Amy Bentley's (2001) assertion that: "When Martha Stewart publications do feature some ethnic fare, the entire process is glossed in a patina of whiteness" (p. 90).

A similar topic was Stewart's possible misrepresentation of cultures that are not part of normative white American culture. Kira, who is multiracial, appreciated Stewart's attempt to represent other cultures by "going to the source." Her praise for Stewart provoked an interesting discussion of Stewart's exploration of other cultures on her television program.

Kira: I watched two shows, when she went out to the Inuits, out in Canada somewhere, to show us how they actually cook salmon and you know, I would never have believed that they, the Inuits are still cooking salmon that way.

Maribel: But there was a National Geographic special, a PBS special that was done by an Inuit man and his son that showed the exact same thing and in greater detail. Martha gave us "Inuit lite."

Kira: Right, but you know something, that's about all I really had time for was "Inuit lite." But she also went to Detroit to this famous barbecue place and actually showed somebody [preparing ribs]. If she had put them ribs on at Turkey

Hill and talked about, with the white linen, and here's your ribs, that would have been one thing, but she went to the place where they were cooking the ribs and went to the source, and that's when I said, "ok Martha, I have to give you props for that" because you see a lot of Mexican cooking by non-Mexicans or, other kinds of cooking methods, that aren't from that culture, or you see them in those fake TV kitchens most of the time, but she actually went out and saw the river with the salmon and the fire and the people in the native dress and you know, she tried, I've got to give her points, she tried, nobody else was trying before, you know?

Kira's appreciation of Stewart's attempt to "go to the source" of other cultures to be able to represent them clearly agitated Maribel, who felt that Stewart does not go far enough to help her viewers understand other cultures. Maribel's frustration is in part the lack of time and detail she perceives in the cultural segments; it is also due in part to the cultural authority that she perceives Stewart flaunts in the segments. Maribel explained her point with reference to another segment:

Another really good episode I remember was when she went to visit a miso plant, where they make organic miso. She went to visit this miso plant, where they still were stepping on the miso, you know, crushing the beans by hand, and Martha's like, "well when you're at home you can crush it in a [bowl]." The guy's like, "No! It doesn't taste right if you don't do it in bare feet," and he says this very clearly and they have some of the finest miso in the country, but it was clear that Martha Stewart was not prepared for what she was seeing, you know? It's like, "what is wrong with you? This is, you know, these people are the ones who are experts, who are you?" And Martha Stewart always comes in as sort of the expert on everything and every once in a while she just looks like an idiot, largely because she is. She doesn't know! And I appreciate the fact that, you know, that she would go to the Inuits and whatever and see how salmon was made, but you don't go in seeing how miso is made and saying, "no you do it this way." It's not her job.

This discussion between Kira and Maribel reflects Jacqueline Bobo's (2003) description of the ways in which audience members from marginalized groups develop oppositional stances to mainstream media texts: "we understand that mainstream media had never rendered our segment of the population faithfully.... Out of habit, as readers of mainstream texts, we have learned to ferret out the beneficial and put up blinders against

the rest” (p. 309). In this case, Kira praises Stewart for going beyond what Kira has come to expect; Maribel, on the hand, feels Stewart’s representations of non-white cultures and practices did not go far enough to construct a full and respectful representation of cultural difference.

Karla, who is white, expressed frustration similar to Maribel’s when discussing the ways she perceived Stewart interactions with non-white guests. She emphasized that “there aren’t many people of color on [Stewart’s] show.” Further, Karla suggested that when Stewart does have non-white guests on the show she “has a particularly difficult time with people of color.” Karla reported that after she first noticed what she believed was Stewart’s discomfort with non-white guests, she then “watched it as a pattern,” with guests like Aretha Franklin, Oprah Winfrey, Quincy Jones, and Bill Cosby. Of the pattern, Karla offered, “I don’t know if it’s black people in particular, she’s very condescending to the Latino folks that are on, or the times that I hear her talk about a woman evidently who’s been a house staff of hers who’s now on her staff-staff, but with Black folks in particular, she seems very, very flustered and it shows, it really shows.” While no one in any interview group indicated that they had witnessed what Karla described, her description is in line with some of the cultural superiority reported by some of the other interviewees—both on matters of culture and in general with guests on the show.

While most of the white women I interviewed acknowledged and accepted Stewart’s whiteness and the whiteness in her texts, a number of the non-white women I interviewed recognized that Stewart’s offerings were limited racially, and they either watched and read with that knowledge or passed over Stewart altogether. Jackie, who is

African-American, emphasized that because Stewart does not address her interests, she is not interested in what Stewart has to offer: “So, my apartment is full of you know basically African-American stuff. Martha doesn’t know about that stuff so [she] doesn’t relate to me.” Kira, who offered that she “comes from a long line of house negroes that worked as domestics,” was initially surprised that Stewart was so interested in housekeeping. In response to a segment we screened about keeping a linen closet organized, Kira insisted that from her ancestors’ experiences “we know that [white women], they were not up there labeling in no cupboards, because you were up there and ‘don’t put the flat sheet in the fitted sheet section, alright?’” Kira further offered that the appeal of Stewart’s television program might be that she can live vicariously, as she suggested her ancestors had: “I guess to a certain extent I am, they have, lived vicariously through the houses they cleaned, through what was given to them, left over and carried home.”

Both Maribel and Kira discussed Stewart and her ideas as part of a larger system of whiteness. Whereas Maribel disdained Stewart for projecting what Maribel believes is a “façade” that is “very much a part of whiteness,” Kira accepted that Stewart’s message is thoroughly white. When I asked Kira how she could enjoy watching whiteness, she responded: “Because everything else is about whiteness, ok? I’d rather watch Martha Stewart who is the real thing, than the wanna-be.” She explained that Martha Stewart is “the real thing,” this way:

Give me the authentic before I get the imitation, because everybody else is imitating her. She is the real thing, ok, and that’s what I want. The real antiques, the weaving that only existed, you know, that’s what I want. I want a certain amount of authenticity even if it’s presented in this fake-false style, which is television, you know, and I take that along with all the other television things, and

it's interesting to decode it, to look at it, the mask and the falseness behind it, that's entertaining too, and the rest of TV is all like that.

Nadia then jumped into the conversation to ask the participants' opinions of B. Smith, an African-American television personality with a program much like Stewart's, though it focuses more specifically on decorating. Nadia was curious to know if African-American women would be more likely to watch Smith than Stewart. Kira was quick to answer, and her answer provoked a response from Wynne:

Kira: No, because, because I'll tell you, I watch Martha Stewart because I expect whiteness from TV and that's a good place for it. TV is a perfect medium to present that false...

Wynne: Wait, so you're seeking out whiteness, is that what you're...

Kira: No, I mean that's what I expect. I know when I turn on the TV, I know what I'm going to get, I'm going to get that whiteness there, now if I want, I'm not going to watch B. Smith to get authentic blackness, I'm going to go to my mother, or people I know and, or somebody who, yeah, I'm going to look for that personal connection, I'm not going to look for it on TV.

Like the black fans of *The Cosby Show* Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis's (1992) interviewed, Kira suggests that the world of television is a world dominated by white people and stories, and that when black people and stories appear on television, they are stereotyped and inauthentic. Kira, like many *Living* fans, was more interested in Stewart's ideas than the way they are presented; she acknowledges yet overlooks the whiteness she sees in the texts, in part because she is used to this framing of texts. Martha fans, like Maribel and Jackie, watched in part to critique Stewart, and thus the whiteness in her texts and the treatment of multicultural subjects only added to their lists of criticisms.

In addition to finding fault with the whiteness of Stewart's texts, many fans considered the role of Stewart's own ethnic and racial affiliations in her success. I asked each of the interview groups to reflect on how Stewart might be received if she looked or

spoke differently than she does. Some suggested that they did not think a different Stewart would be received differently. Renee, who is white, emphasized that “race doesn’t really seem to be a factor as much any more, these days.” She felt that if Stewart “had the same publicity,” she would have been equally popular. Janice also indicated that she thinks appearance does not matter: “Well, there’s Lydia, the cook from Italy. She does fine, she hardly has any hair, she has less hair than my husband, bad figure, cooks beautifully, and I like to watch her.” Both Dianne and Hailey suggested that an English accent might enhance Stewart’s popularity.

To the white-identified fans who believed race was not a factor in Stewart’s success, Oprah Winfrey was a frequent reference point. For example, Aaron argued that Winfrey’s success was proof that Stewart could have been non-white and been as successful: “Look at Oprah Winfrey, she has this mega-empire too.” Carole argued that Stewart’s success was more about her “creative energy or ability” than her race. Mary agreed and suggested that with the right energy one could “transcend an accent or race.” These responses are similar to the ones Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis (1992) received in their study of *The Cosby Show*. Their white respondents suggested that Bill Cosby’s (and his character, Cliff Huxtable’s) success proved that race is no longer an impediment to success in the United States, implying that the success of a few African-Americans indicates that those who do not succeed in American society are to blame for their failures. Jhally and Lewis explain: “For many white respondents in our study, the Huxtables’ achievement of the American dream leads them to a world where race no longer matters” (1992, p. 110). From my respondents’ perspectives, race played no part

in Winfrey's success; her success came from her drive and her ideas. To them, these individual attributes erased the barriers of racial discrimination.

On the other hand, several white fans felt that Stewart's appearance, accent, and name bolstered her popularity. Hailey and Hannah suggested that Stewart could "maybe" have brown hair and be as successful, but Karla disagreed, "she'd have to have blond." Bethany noted that she felt Stewart could have been equally successful as a brunette or red-head.

Skin color and Stewart's association with New England (discussed above) were also important to the respondents. Dara shared that she thinks Stewart's success is "very white Yankee." Olivia, who was a bit uncomfortable with my question, and with her response, suggested that Stewart's association with New England gave her the credibility she needed to convincingly discuss taste:

Touchy question. I think, quite honestly, this country is much more geared toward the white woman or man who's sort of the Yankee type, doesn't have an accent, I think if it was someone with a wicked Boston accent I think people would be, I don't know, I hate to say it, I guess for me, I might be like, "well, where does she get these ideas?" I might be a little more questioning. So, that's uncomfortable for me to say because I think that is a little bit of prejudice, that's not really fair.

Like Olivia, both Bethany and Pamela connected Stewart's race with her class, arguing that a different appearance would conflict with Stewart's subject matter—or at least the perception that Stewart was teaching high taste. Pamela remarked that she did not think Stewart's main audience would accept a change in her appearance or background: "I think we as white, upper middle class women would find it hard to buy her message about fine living if she were from the 'hood." Pamela's statement reflects Jhally and Lewis's (1992) suggestion that race and class are intertwined and that non-whites can escape the narrow characterizations of racial stereotypes only by raising their

class status. Pamela's assumption then, is that Stewart's class level is incompatible with being an African American "from the 'hood." Bethany's comment was similar:

I don't think that upper middle class people would be all excited about having, you know, an Asian woman tell them how to fold their linen, I don't think that would have flew [*sic.*]. It seems like if she wasn't the epitome of that demographic, those people wouldn't want to watch her.

Carole commented that if Stewart had a Latin accent, it would "exclude a certain segment of the population." Fiona insisted that if Stewart was Asian, "there probably wouldn't be a show." Jackie suggested that one's race would determine what kind of cooking or decorating it would be acceptable to do, whereas white is treated as universal:

Well, I definitely think if she had been African American she would not have gotten where she was. Now, there are African Americans who look and say what she does, so that's a whole other issue. But even that type I don't think would have gotten to where she is. I mean, I think that they would have expected a Black woman to be doing Southern fried chicken and kind of Sylvia's kind of stuff of Harlem. I definitely don't think she could have been African American, I don't know what else she could have been, because generally people, unless you're white you are assumed to be that other thing, so you're Italian you do Italian cooking, when you're Asian American, you do Asian American cooking, but white is universal, so in some ways you have to do that, to do everything that she's doing.

Jackie's comment underscores Richard Dyer's (1997) assertion that while white people can speak generally for humanity, "Raced people can't do that – they can only speak for their race" (p. 2).

Another issue raised by the interviewees was Stewart's name, which of course, has the possibility to communicate as much as her appearance. The connotations of Stewart's last name were raised in reference to a larger discussion about Stewart's Polish ancestry. In conversation, several interviewees maintained that Stewart could not have been as successful as she has been had she used her maiden name:

Lane: If she had her birthname, nope, nope, nope, nope.

Sarah: Yeah, that's true, her birthname is very Polish.

Karla: She knew that, too.

Sarah: I used to know it, what is her name?

Karla: Kostyra

Sarah: Oh that's right, yeah! "Martha Stewart" almost sounds like made up, you know it's like perfect American, middle American.

Kira was also interested in Stewart's Polish heritage, and found it amusing that Stewart's history seems to contradict all that she is contemporarily: "She's from an ethnic background, and here she is promoting all American whiteness, upper class whiteness."

For several of the fans I interviewed, Stewart's Polish ancestry was a source of affiliation: their experiences either being Polish-American or living in predominantly Polish areas made them feel connected to Stewart. Many cited the television programs where Stewart's mother, Martha Kostyra, was a guest on the show, as their favorites. Sisters Delores and Candace reported that Stewart's mother reminded them of their grandmother who was Polish; Delores noted that she enjoyed watching television segments in which Martha Kostyra was a guest because "They make a lot of the same types of food, and maybe that's why I like it."

Lane, who is Polish-American, suggested that she enjoys watching Stewart in part because "I am fascinated with the way she negotiates her heritage." Sarah also suggested that Stewart's upbringing and ancestry influenced her perception of Stewart: "She's from New Jersey, I'm from New Jersey, ok. That's very minor, but, it's something. I'm from a Polish town, so I kind of can relate that a little bit."

For other fans, Stewart's Polish ancestry helped to explain aspects of Stewart's personality. Janice, who is English, Scotch and Polish, said that she sees Stewart as "downright Polish in the sense of stick-to-it-ness, hardworking." Mary emphasized that Stewart is "very, very driven," in part because she "supposedly came from a poor Polish family that had to struggle for everything."

Like gender, Stewart's race makes important contributions to fans' interest in her and her media texts. The fans I interviewed suggested that whiteness serves as a universal marker that bolsters Stewart's credibility and allows her to discuss upper-class taste with authority. Though some Martha fans criticized Stewart for not fully or accurately incorporating and representing non-white interests and topics, *Living* fans appreciated Stewart's attempts to teach viewers about other cultures. Almost all of the people I interviewed suggested that Stewart's whiteness contributed to her success as a popular media icon, and, for several fans, Stewart's Polish heritage served as an important point of identification. Importantly, the respondents' own racial identifications worked alongside the characteristics of the two fan groups to shape the respondents' reactions to the racial markers in Stewart's persona and texts.

Class: Identity and Aspiration

Class played an unmistakable role in the interviewees' perceptions of Stewart and her media messages. Most of the respondents shared perceptions of Martha Stewart's socioeconomic level and believed it to be a critical component of her credibility as an arbiter of good taste; however, the ways in which they interpreted the impact of Stewart's class level on her persona and products differed. For example, *Living* and Martha fans both found the way in which Stewart presents her upper class stories and projects to be

pretentious. Though *Living* fans believed that Stewart's attitude lent credibility to her messages, Martha fans reported being off-put by Stewart's pompousness. Stewart's own class aspiration and ascension figured prominently in fans' evaluations of Stewart's attitude.

Unlike fans' predictions about Stewart's presumed audiences based on gender and sexuality, fans struggled with defining the class status of a typical Martha Stewart audience member. Ultimately, the fans' explanations for their own interest in Stewart helped to clarify this question: most fans suggested that their own aspirations to and voyeuristic interests in how upper-class people live drew them to the show. That many fans watch and read *Martha Stewart Living* to imagine themselves in a different lifestyle explains, in part, why they felt the time and expense of many of Stewart's projects were "over the top" or unrealistic for their lives. The respondents suggested that though they were interested in learning from Stewart, they did not have the leisure time to undertake many of her projects. Instead, fans reported shopping from Stewart's "Everyday" line at Kmart.

While almost all of the fans I interviewed felt Stewart's products at Kmart were not in line with the upper class tastes reflected in Stewart's lifestyle suggestions, *Living* fans were mostly pleased with their purchases, and Martha fans were mostly disappointed. The responses I received from inquiry into the role of class in Stewart's persona and messages repeatedly suggested that class and taste are strong components of fans' feelings about Stewart.

When I asked my interview participants to describe Martha Stewart, *Living* fans and Martha fans alike described Stewart as having a condescending attitude that they

described as being directly linked to Stewart's class identity. Pamela said Stewart "has kind of a superior thing going on." Rachel described Stewart as "uppity, uppity," and Lane offered that she believes Stewart has a "very pretentious affect," which she linked to Stewart's "perfectionism" and "obsessiveness." Jackie believes Stewart is "elitist" and "arrogant;" she further suggested that she thinks of Stewart "as somebody who would be married to one of the robber barons, like the Rockefellers, the Cabots, [or] the Lodges." Jenny argued that Stewart "rubs her money in your face." Tom similarly stated that Stewart "wants to brag about her good taste and I think she does get her jollies out of conveying to people that she has good taste and she wants to teach people good taste, too."

For many participants, Stewart's condescension related directly to her approach to the information and projects she details in her media texts. Sarah explained, "I get the sense that, [Stewart thinks] most of civilization just doesn't know what they're doing and she's raising everyone a notch, she's lifting up the whole culture . . . everybody should be doing things in a better way." Jenny likewise described Stewart's attitude toward her audience as "higher than thou, I'm a better person than you and I'm going to show you as a lowly person exactly what you could do if you really wanted to try." Karla, in describing one of Stewart's gardening projects, shared that she feels that Stewart "talks about it as if, if you don't do this, you are not a true gardener." Aaron offered a similar example:

I remember watching her, they were making homemade pizza and she had a guest on, and, they were talking about how easy it is to make homemade pizza dough, rather than buying pizza dough already made, and she was kind of talking with this guest chef. She said "now that you have this recipe, you'll never have to use store bought pizza dough again," you know, like "for any of you out there using store bought pizza dough, you are losers, and you will never amount to anything."

Martha fans were likely to report feeling frustrated or angry by this perceived aspect of Stewart's personality. *Living* fans were more likely to feel that Stewart's attitude was either not important to them or a critical component of her authority as a credible teacher. Fiona and Lauren conceded to their interview group that they believe Stewart can be condescending, yet both stressed that this aspect of Stewart's personality did not bother them. Barbara maintained that Stewart's class image is "a strong aspect to her, to people believing and understanding why she's doing some of [this] stuff." Mary agreed: "she's made it well known that she has a house on Long Island, and a house in Connecticut, and a house in New York . . . She wants people to know 'look at me, I have all this money and I can still do this, so if I can do it, you can too, even if you don't have millions like I do.' I do think that's a big part of her image."

Perhaps a reason that many *Living* fans were more forgiving of Stewart's condescending attitude is their interest in Stewart's upbringing in a lower-middle class New Jersey neighborhood. Dara pointed out that Stewart "remembers and seems to treasure her working girl roots." Mary used Stewart's family background to explain Stewart's drive and success "she's very, very driven and it supposedly has a lot to do with her upbringing, you know, she supposedly came from a poor Polish family, that had to struggle for everything."

Some felt that Stewart's class background is in tension with the image she projects. Beatrice, for example, noted "I get the impression that she's probably from very kind of poor background and all of this has kind of gone to her head." Bethany suggested that Stewart's current class identity does not seem to reconcile with her New Jersey beginnings: "Didn't she start off as, wasn't she poor or something when she was growing

up and then how did she become so uppity and pretentious?” Tom noted Stewart’s background and argued that Stewart’s current class identity is a calculated performance that she has mastered: “she’s trying to represent herself as old money and she does a very good job, she’s very observant, she nails it on the head.”

When Stewart’s class history was raised in discussion, a few participants maintained that Stewart could not have been from such humble beginnings, indicating, perhaps, that Stewart’s current upper-class identification is so strong that fans could not imagine that she had ever been anything else. In response to Beatrice’s comment above, Olivia replied: “No, I don’t think so, I think she’s from a semi-old good family.” Bethany’s comment was similarly rebuked by two of her group members. Fiona responded “I’ve heard that she wasn’t really that poor.” Jenny answered, “No, she was a stockbroker, she had the money before.”

While many of the interviewees disagreed on Stewart’s breeding, most agreed that an important component of Stewart’s classed identity and messages is her connection to New England. Stewart’s connection to New England, origin of the upper-class White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP), raised Stewart’s class status in the minds of the interviewees. Dara suggested that Stewart was “definitely New England centered.” Pamela agreed and suggested that “I sometimes think that if you live outside of New England, her message is not as appealing.” Tom described Stewart as “very Connecticut.” Hannah maintained that Stewart is “nothing but Yankee.” Catherine insisted, “everyone knows she has her Turkey Hill farm in Westport, Connecticut, the old farmhouse that she’s redone and that’s become part of her image that people have.” Jenny said that she believes Stewart has a “Yankee attitude.”

When I asked the participants to explain what being a Yankee is, their answers were very similar. As Catherine explained, an important aspect of Stewart's personality that makes her a Yankee is that she is hardworking and completes tasks by herself: "to do it yourself, to live on the farm, have your chickens and eat your eggs." For Hailey, being a Yankee meant being "practical," and for Lane it meant "order, cleanliness, hardworking." Emily similarly reported that Stewart's Yankee sensibility came through in her attitude, which she described as "Do everything for yourself, don't do anything half-heartedly, industry is good for the soul."

Recycling or reusing materials was another important aspect of Yankee identity that the participants raised as critical to Stewart's New England connection. Sarah described this attitude as "you use everything, you don't waste anything." Tom explained that Stewart is a Yankee because of her interest in "farm houses, restoring old furniture, never throwing something out, always making a new use of it or recycling." Jenny suggested that Stewart is "resourceful and thrifty" and used the segment we watched together as an example of Stewart's Yankee nature. In the segment to which Jenny referred, Stewart made applesauce from "drop apples," or apples that had fallen on the ground. Abby also mentioned this segment and insisted that "I love that part of her. That feels Yankee to me."

The upper-class image Stewart projects and the upper-class topics she includes in her media offerings made it difficult for some participants to determine the class status of Stewart's audience. Many respondents' first impulse was to suggest that Stewart's audience members are very wealthy. For example, Renee asserted that Stewart appeals to "the typical two income rich family home;" likewise Pamela felt that Stewart draws in

“people with lots of disposable income.” Maggie answered this way: “Well, my friends who read [Stewart’s magazine], the only ones who do, are highly educated women, successful, with money to throw around.”

Some respondents’ beliefs that Stewart appeals to the wealthy were based on their assertions that only people with money and leisure would have time to follow Stewart’s advice. For example, Janice insisted that Stewart’s audience members must be “upper middle class” because “the middle class woman is very hard at work, she comes home, she’s got to do household responsibilities and husbands do not pick up the slack from what I can see.” Katie felt that people with a lot of money might have “a little more leisure and they might have more time to do this stuff.” Wynne emphasized that the gardening segments especially appeal to audiences with money: “the gardening stuff caters to a certain kind of person, like if you have a garden you have a pretty big yard.”

Other fans suggested that Stewart does not appeal to people with a lot of money. Jenny described the audience she believes Stewart appeals to as “wanna-bes.” Though no other interviewee used this term, several did describe a similar group of people. Wynne suggested that Stewart draws people who “have a little bit extra” and “are trying to get up” in their class status. Lauren described Stewart’s audience as being in the “middle.” She agreed with Jenny’s description of this group as “always wanting to be rich.” Maribel likewise stated that Stewart’s television viewers are “people who are aspiring and who have the time and ability to aspire to whatever it is that Martha Stewart is selling.”

A few respondents argued that Stewart appeals to a variety of class groups. For example, Olivia maintained that Stewart “covers every socioeconomic class to some degree, because she’s everywhere now, she’s omnipresent, she’s in Kmart, she’s got the

upscale stuff and then the regular stuff.” Max indicated that he believes that Stewart draws differently classed audiences to her television show and her magazine:

If you look at her TV show, you think of lower-middle-class white people who are apt to watch TV. If you look at her magazine, it’s definitely in the same league as a *Traditional Home*, I mean, the advertisers, the things in it that she shows in the house, I mean, it’s definitely a much higher level than say, a *Better Homes and Gardens*, which is probably her Kmart crowd.

Stewart’s appeal to a range of tastes and economic abilities has been noted as an important aspect of her success: “Stewart’s genius is her ability to span the broad spectrum of household needs on all economic levels” (Bentley, 2001, p. 93).

However, it is Stewart’s portrayal of upper-class life that respondents found most appealing. Like Modleski’s (1982) and Radway’s (1984) investigations of romance readers, many of the fans I interviewed discussed the ways in which they used Stewart’s magazines and television programs to explore their fantasies; however, the fantasies of Stewart’s fans had more to do with class aspiration than gender relations. In Renee’s self-introduction to the group, she specified that she has “tons of hopes to be half as rich” as Stewart. Tom similarly shared that he would “love to be able to live like that.” Abby reported that when she watches Stewart she feels jealous: “I don’t have a closet and I’m jealous, I would love one, that’s another thing with Martha. I feel like at times I’m jealous because she’s got the beautiful pots and pans.”

Lauren explained her interest in Stewart’s lifestyle suggestions with reference to US culture: “Our society is voyeuristic, we want to see how those people live, we want to see what’s in her closet and how her closet’s set up, how you could do it if you had absolutely no worries as far as money goes and what you would do with your time.” Kira

reported that one of the aspects of Stewart's messages that she likes is that Stewart gives her access to places she would never be able to go on her own:

You would never walk into a showroom, you don't have access. She gives you the access to those showrooms, to those designers who are making, the obscure pottery and "you can get this, check our website." She just opens up a world that's sort of "decorator's showroom only" types, to the industry only, so she gives you that kind of access and she opens up the palace of mysteries of how some homes are fabulous and well-ordered, as opposed to the reality of one paycheck away from poverty, you know, rent's two weeks late

The importance of Stewart's class prestige became clear when I asked one group to imagine Stewart addressing topics that were less high-brow. Barbara asserted that "we live that way, we don't want to watch that, I want to watch a show about the stuff we're aspiring to." Emily agreed: "that's not the stuff that dreams are made of."

While fans reported great interest in Stewart's upscale information and projects, many reported that they did not have the leisure time, disposable income, and work space to undertake these particular tasks. As aforementioned, fans expressed interest in undertaking Stewart's "good things;" however, fans suggested their socioeconomic levels were barriers to undertaking many of Stewart's other tasks. The participants' express that Stewart's more upscale suggestions are out of their reach, yet they are still interested in Stewart's magazines and television programs. This is a major components of Stewart's texts, which *The New York Times*' Robin Pogrebin (1998) describes as giving Stewart's audience "something impossible to aspire to, yet something they can relate to" (para. 61).

In every group interview I conducted, at least one person described Stewart and/or many of her tasks as "over the top." Renee and Pamela further described this aspect of Stewart and her suggestions as "unrealistic." For Katie "over the top" meant "persnickety," which she explained as projects "that no one is going to do" that take

on “a sort of ridiculous quality.” Beatrice agreed and argued that Stewart “does that extra above what any one normal would ever do that makes us sort of laugh at her, but it’s always fun to see.”

Like many interviewees, Max gave an example of a project he believed was “over the top.” He referenced a television segment on marzipan that he believed was “a waste of time:”

She did this cooking episode one time where she made these decorations for a cake and she made these small, teeny little decorations and she had all these obscure little tools to make veins in the leaves and make little impressions . . . but to go accumulate all these obscure little tools you’d never use to do something so complicated, I think it’s something you could really duplicate at a really nice pastry shop.

Tom, who was familiar with the marzipan segment, added “first of all, no one is going to eat it, it’s just sugar, and she spent all that time, making the little cherries and the stems . . . it would have taken me a year to make that cake!” Barbara also gave an example of a television episode she believed was “over the top.” She described a segment in which Stewart visited the Maine boat builders who were constructing her new boat: “She insisted that the color of the fiberglass was the color of, she has some exotic chickens, and the color of the eggshells, a peachy color, and they had to mix this color particular for her, I thought that was a little exotic.” In response to a segment in which Stewart instructed viewers to make topiaries in the shape of deer, Jenny asserted, “do you have the time, the energy, do you? Where do you find the shape of that deer to make the topiary with? I mean, it’s like, let’s get back to reality, most people can’t do that.”

Many interviewees suggested that Stewart’s projects are time-consuming, expensive, and require space that they do not have. Tom described Stewart’s projects as “very time consuming;” likewise, Catherine suggested Stewart’s project ideas require a

“huge amount of time.” Renee said she did not have the “time or patience” to undertake Stewart’s projects, and Grace was similarly put off by “the amount of time” many of Stewart’s projects seem to require. Katie said she would use Stewart’s suggestions only for “a very special occasion.” Jackie expressed frustration with Stewart and her projects because she believes Stewart “really assumes that people, that women, have all the time in the world . . . there’s an assumption that women are at home and they have lots of leisure.” In line with Jackie, Rachel suggested that “everything is work” to Stewart and “she couldn’t just kick back and be normal or not proper.”

Another frequent description given of Stewart’s projects was that they are expensive. One of the most common complaints in this category was that Stewart’s projects required the purchase of unusual tools. Dara stated that a lot of Stewart’s crafts, “require tools that I don’t have.” Emily expressed irritation in instances when Stewart “uses a particular tool [because] it’s necessary to get a particular effect and you think, I’m gonna find it and I’m going to use it once.” Similarly, Dianne insisted, “I’m not going to use a tool that’s like an antique from like the 1800s and there’s only like two of these in the entire world.” Pamela commented that Stewart’s suggested tools are sometimes “expensive;” she reported that “it’s unlikely that I would invest the money and time in a project like making my own shower curtain with a grommet machine and all.”

Additionally, interviewees expressed that Stewart’s ideas require space that they do not have. For example, Isabel relayed that she does not attempt many of Stewart’s projects because “I just do not have the work space.” Many respondents reacted negatively to the television segment we screened in which Stewart demonstrated how she organizes her linen closets. Lane commented that “I don’t live in the income bracket that

would allow me to do that. We live in 900 square feet, who has the room? If I have that much room, then I can hire somebody to do that.” Similarly, Hannah reported that she enjoyed all of the segments we screened except for the closet segment because “I was thinking of our apartment which is small, and who has enough space to hammer in little labels?” Jenny, in discussion with the women in her interview group remarked, “Who the hell has a linen closet like that?”

The discussions about how Stewart’s “over the top” ideas and projects required so much time, money, and space ultimately led to evaluations of Stewart’s own time and authenticity as the creative force behind Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. For example, Beatrice raised this question in her interview: “How much of it does she really do?” Elaine recounted that when she watches Stewart she thinks, “that’s really sweet, but who really did it for you Martha? You didn’t dig that dirt up, are you kidding me?” Candace suggested that Stewart’s lifestyle is incompatible with the suggestions she makes in her media offerings: “Who has time for that? And she owns all these homes and I know she was in Florida last winter. You know and then she’s in the mountains, she’s climbing glaciers and she’s baking cookies at the same time?”

That Stewart must have a staff to accomplish the activities she suggests, yet rarely shows or refers to her staff while detailing her projects, was a sore point for a few participants, who believed that Stewart too often takes credit for others’ ideas. Candace, for instance, disclosed that she had heard the following about Stewart: “Julia Child had once said that the only problem with Martha is that she credits herself for everything, she won’t say I got a recipe from someone else, it’s all ‘me me me.’” Jenny was adamant that Stewart regularly “takes credit for things that she didn’t do.” Over the course of our two

hour discussion, Jenny repeatedly returned to this point, citing numerous examples, to the frustration of some of her group mates. Jenny's example of a Martha Stewart-designed wedding that she attended is representative of her multiple arguments. In this case, Jenny was frustrated that Stewart had been hired to design the wedding, yet it was mostly put together by her staff:

The table settings were this high, it was gorgeous, but it was obnoxious in its gorgeousness, you know? I mean, it was definitely Martha Stewart, it was so Martha, but she didn't really do it, she had her people come in, but she took the credit. No, Martha wasn't here, so why is she getting the credit for that? That's again, Martha taking the credit.

In Stewart's defense, Lauren responded: "A lot of businesses are run like that, you know? She's a very savvy businesswoman." Fiona supported Lauren's position: "She's already scratched her way up from doing all the grunt work and now she can have other people do that for her because she can walk into a room and in five seconds say, 'ok, I see grapes and flowers and money please, see you later,' you know? She's entitled, she's earned it."

Like Fiona, several fans believed that Stewart's access to staff is a mark of her success and privilege. Pamela credited Stewart for surrounding "herself with creative people." Janice noted, "behind her is a cast of people, there's gardeners for the yard, I'm sure she does some of it for pure pleasure, but she doesn't have to worry that it will all get done and that makes a big difference."

Despite the knowledge of and respect for Stewart's staff, it was important to many *Living* fans to believe that Stewart accomplished some of her tasks by herself. To these fans, Stewart's hands became a symbol of her authenticity. Maggie described Stewart's hands as "very hardened," Katie described them as "gardener's hands," and Sarah said that Stewart's hands make her look like "she's a construction worker." Carole noticed

Stewart's hands, too, and remarked her hands make her look "like she does this stuff."

Hannah agreed:

I've watched her hands too, and instead of having like wonderful manicures and stuff, it looks like she actually does her work and it makes her more credible when she's out in her garden cause somebody's not just prompted her on what to say and it seems like she really knows what she's doing and she's there cutting the roots, and you know, I've seen her digging up all sorts of stuff in her garden when she does her crafts, it really looks like she's really done the work."

Given that *Living* and Martha fans alike associated Martha Stewart and her lifestyle suggestions with upper-class taste and ideals, they expressed confusion when asked to explain Stewart's Everyday product line at Kmart, a national discount retailer. Catherine and Hannah felt that placing Stewart's products at Kmart was "odd;" Sarah found it "weird." Mary offered that the association "cracks me up" because in her magazine and television programs Stewart visits "those stores in Greenwich, Connecticut, and New York and she's merchandising in Kmart at the mall." Aaron shared that he found the association "funny" because "most of the people who shop at Kmart could never afford" the lifestyle Stewart demonstrates in her media offerings. Like many respondents, Jackie suggested that she would have expected Stewart to place her products in a more upscale store for fear of "bringing the brand down." Jackie suggested Saks Fifth Avenue and Lord & Taylor as retail chains more in line with Stewart's image; other respondents mentioned Filene's, Bloomingdale's, Neiman-Marcus, and Target.

While respondents may have been wary of Stewart's decision to create a product line for Kmart, they were in agreement about what influenced Stewart to do so. Many, like Isabel, argued that Stewart's decision was "just a marketing strategy to get those viewers of the lower middle class." Hailey likewise emphasized that Stewart's affiliation with Kmart allows "people who don't have the income to do all these different things to

buy into the fantasy of Martha Stewart.” Tom flippantly described Stewart’s connection to Kmart as “trying to spread a little perfection to the poor people.” Kira’s response echoed Tom’s: “selling upper-middle class values to the lower-middle class.” Bethany suggested that Stewart’s decision to align with Kmart would allow her to “expand the base of people who are watching her” as well as “make people who have less money think” they can live like Martha Stewart. Stewart has similarly commented on her Kmart line, suggesting that she could help the less fortunate raise their taste levels: “There’s no reason why you can’t have pretty things at a good price....These people watch Dallas and The Colbys—they know what elegant living is. They need help, and I see myself as the helper” (qtd. in Hubbard, 1988, para. 3).

Most of the people I interviewed had purchased items from Stewart’s line at Kmart. *Living* fans were more likely to be pleased with the items they purchased, while Martha fans were critical of Stewart’s product line at Kmart. For example, Lane “liked the colors” of Stewart’s linens at Kmart, Karla felt Stewart had “done a good job” with the outdoor furniture at Kmart, and Hailey felt that Stewart’s “styles were a lot nicer” than Kmart’s other products. On the other hand, Sarah felt the drinking glasses and bed sheets she bought were “crap,” and Jenny felt Stewart’s products at Kmart were “ridiculously expensive.” Several Martha fans felt that Stewart’s products had monopolized Kmart; Kira, for example, emphasized that Stewart: “dominated certain product lines and what you didn’t have was the cheap alternative anymore.” Both fan groups expressed that the quality of the items in Stewart’s Everyday line at Kmart was lower than the items Stewart used in her magazine and on her television show. Only three

of the interviewees believed that Stewart would use the products she sells at Kmart in her own home.

Fans were much more likely to suggest that Stewart used items from her catalog, Martha by Mail, in her own home. Only a few respondents indicated that they had purchased items from Martha by Mail; most, like Dianne, insisted that “it’s ridiculous how much the stuff costs. I can go to the local craft store and buy cookie cutters for fifty cents a piece, why would I pay thirty dollars?” Candace argued that the products in Martha by Mail were “quality,” and Karla reported that the products she had ordered were “really, really fabulous, they’re good quality products.” Catherine agreed and maintained that if Stewart selected it for the catalog, “it’s going to be a little bit better than acceptable quality.”

In so many ways, upper class taste is a central component of Martha Stewart’s persona and her message, and to my respondents’ interest in Martha Stewart and her media texts. Fans are both drawn to Stewart for her upper-class identity, yet rebuke her for being “uppity.” They take pleasure in the moments when Stewart demonstrates a “Yankee sensibility” and look for cues that she actually uses her own suggestions. Fans rarely undertake Stewart’s projects, but enjoy learning about Stewart’s tastes and interests; they use Stewart’s lessons to build cultural capital. They acknowledge that audience members with more time and money must be using Stewart’s tips and argue that Stewart’s product line at Kmart in many ways makes sense because it draws the attention of those who aspire to live like Stewart does. As with gender and sexuality, the middle-class identifications most of the respondents shared figured prominently in their interpretations of and interest in Stewart and her messages.

ImClone

My interviews with fans spanned nearly the entire time in which the details and ramifications of Stewart's ImClone stock sale were being reported in the US media: my interviews began in the fall of 2002, just after the insider trading allegations surfaced in summer 2002. One of my groups met the day after Stewart was indicted in June 2003, two of my groups met within a month after Stewart was found guilty in March 2004, one group met one week after Stewart was sentenced in July 2004, and I held a follow-up interview in October 2005 with fans I had previously interviewed just as Stewart was mounting her highly publicized comeback. Each interview allowed me to "check in" with Stewart's fans to gauge their reactions to the ImClone situation as it progressed.

While most of the fans I interviewed supported and defended Stewart, some of the fans in my focus groups rebuked Stewart for getting into trouble. These fans suggested that Stewart should have acted more carefully than she did and that Stewart's sale to preserve what they assumed must have been a small amount of money to her made her seem greedy. Many of the respondents who felt that Stewart should have been more careful about her business dealings drew on Stewart's former experience as a stock broker. Others similarly held Stewart responsible for her actions because of her success in the world of business; these fans were disappointed in Stewart's actions. Many believed that Stewart was too smart to be able to claim that she did not know that she may have been involved in something illegal.

Despite their criticism of Stewart's role in the ImClone scandal, both the *Living* and the Martha fans were generally supportive of Stewart and thought that Stewart had been treated unfairly. Many of the people I interviewed were cautious when discussing

Stewart's situation and stressed as they talked about their positions on Stewart's case that they were not convinced that she was guilty. Candace, whom I interviewed in October 2002, stressed that even though new facts about Stewart's ImClone sale were still being released, Stewart "hasn't been found guilty of anything yet." Renee, in a November 2002 interview, echoed Candace's caution and suggested that Stewart's guilt "hasn't been proven." Max, discussing his take on Stewart's legal troubles in May 2003, qualified his statements with "If in fact she's guilty, I mean, we don't know that." Tom, also in May 2003, followed up his judgment of Stewart's alleged actions with a qualification: "I think it was kind of a lousy, like what she did was wrong. Well, if she did it." Even though Stewart had been found guilty and had been sentenced by the time I interviewed Jenny in July 2004, it was important to her to point out that Stewart was not found guilty of insider trading, she was instead found guilty of lying to federal prosecutors: "But they didn't, they didn't get her, the jury didn't find her guilty of [insider trading], because she never admitted to it."

Stewart was commonly thought to have been indicted and convicted of insider trading; while charges of insider trading were the beginnings of Stewart's legal troubles, she in fact was indicted and convicted of charges relating to lying to federal prosecutors. Interviewees (and the media) frequently discussed and debated the assumed charges of insider trading, nonetheless. A thread of conversation about insider trading that I heard many times was that it seems to be a common crime, so common perhaps that it is not worthy of prosecution. Further, fans suggested that Stewart's downfall was not that she allegedly sold her ImClone stock with inside information, but that she was caught in the act of doing so. Pamela described Stewart's actions as "one stupid move, done every day

by lots of people, she just got nabbed.” Scott, who I interviewed at *The Apprentice* audition, relayed a similar perspective when he explained why he felt Stewart had not been treated fairly: “If they were to send everyone to jail that had done insider trading, we wouldn’t have enough room for them, so, unfortunately, you know, because that stuff happens everyday, on a daily basis, and people are aware of that, it’s just that she got caught.” Abby argued that she assumes insider trading to be so common that she does not even think it is wrong: “But I don’t even know if truly what she did was all that wrong, maybe it was and maybe I don’t fully understand, but I really just feel like that’s part of standard corporate behavior.”

The fact that the allegations, indictment and conviction of Stewart unfolded at the same time major corporate scandals were unfolding complicated fans’ analyses of Stewart’s legal situation. Many fans referenced these scandals and used them as a benchmark for judging Stewart’s alleged crimes. Every interviewee expressed, in differing degrees, that Stewart’s crimes were lesser in comparison. Pamela offered that Stewart’s case was “small potatoes” compared to other corporate scandals. Carole suggested that Stewart “wasn’t making a ton of money at the expense of somebody else and it really angers me that this has become an issue.” Tom offered, “You know, Martha Stewart, that was pennies compared to what’s going on, she just got a raw deal.” Brian, who I interviewed at *The Apprentice* audition, believed that Stewart should not have had to go to jail because “there’s nobody from Enron, there’s nobody from MCI/Worldcom, none of them are in jail right now. If she was there, they should all be in a cell next to her, as far as I’m concerned.”

Enron was a frequent reference point for many of the interviewees; many fans argued that thousands of employees and investors were affected by the actions of upper management at Enron, while Stewart's crimes related to her personal stock sale and did not directly impact her company. Candace, for example, saw a clear distinction between what happened at Enron and what Stewart allegedly did: "And even if she was guilty, it's nowhere near the level of some of these other male executives and she, they're just vilifying her in the same way as the Enron people, which I think is so wrong." Isabel suggested that the acts at Enron were premeditated and Stewart's were not: "Well, the people at Enron did it deliberately and [Martha Stewart] did it without really understanding the consequences." The sheer number of people affected by the Enron situation made Stewart's actions less severe for Dara, who said: "at least it didn't wipe out thousands of retirement plans." Jackie similarly stated that Stewart "was protecting herself, but she wasn't causing the downfall of hundreds of thousands of people, and that, for me, was the cutoff."

Those who believed that Stewart was treated unfairly referenced the public's negative opinions of Stewart to explain why she might have been an easy target; this is a major shift for Martha fans, many of whom had previously participated in the negative constructions of Stewart. A few fans suggested that the media's appetite for scandal influenced some of the publicity around the case. When I asked fans to explain why they felt the allegations about Stewart's stock sales were unjust, Grace replied, "I think the media eats up the idea of Martha Stewart doing something wrong." Max also referenced what he believed was the media's constant focus on the details of Stewart's life: "the whole ImClone scandal, . . . it was just blasted all over, you know, she's blowing up,

she's unhappy, she's depressed, she left her kids, I mean, there's always this idea, I think it goes back, people like to see the perfect fall or like to see someone that's this far up and knock them down a few pegs." Fiona suggested that Stewart's celebrity undoubtedly led to her prosecution; she suggested that if an average person had taken Stewart's actions, they would not have gotten in trouble: "I don't think, I don't think they'd do a goddamn thing if it were you or me. There are plenty of people that do this kind of stuff everyday and nobody ever sneezes at it." At *The Apprentice* auditions in February 2005, Susan emphasized that she thinks the media coverage of Stewart's legal troubles made the situation more serious than it would have been otherwise: "I think that maybe she was not completely innocent of any wrongdoing, but I think that they made it a lot worse with the media coverage and the way that they handled it."

Some fans argued that hatred of Martha Stewart blew the ImClone scandal out of proportion. Aaron, for example, suggested that the case was: "blown way out of proportion, she was made a scapegoat, you know, people, there were a lot people that always hated her and they were looking for any excuse they could to burn her at the stake, so to speak; and I think this was the perfect opportunity to do that. Or try." Abby similarly stated that she felt that Stewart had "been targeted, people have gone after, people really hate Martha." Fiona argued that "people who hate her probably feel . . . that this is knocking her down a peg or two." Wynne offered that the reason Stewart had not been treated more leniently is: "because she is Martha Stewart."

A number of participants felt gender discrimination was at the heart of the supposed mistreatment of Stewart. Nadia emphasized that she thinks it is "clear" that Stewart was targeted "because she's a woman." Candace agreed that Stewart was

targeted because she was a celebrity, but stressed that there was more to Stewart's treatment; she emphasized that Stewart is "a female celebrity." Karla maintained that the treatment of Stewart "reeks of sexism." Rachel also insisted that Stewart's sex had affected her treatment in the ImClone matter: "nothing's ever a coincidence, especially when it comes to things happening to people. I mean, there's a boy's club and then there are people who fall outside of that and I'm sure that this is a case of that." Abby shared a similar sentiment, stressing that Stewart's success helped her to achieve more than most women had; she saw the treatment of Stewart as a reprimand for being too powerful: "You want power? We're going to punish women of power. You want like to have this big empire? You're going to get punished."

Similarly, some respondents specifically suggested that the nature of Stewart's work (homemaking), and the projection that she is perfect may have played a role in the degree to which the US public seemed to take pleasure in her downfall. Maribel suggested that she felt Stewart's case was being treated quite fairly in the legal system but that she had been treated unfairly in the public eye "because she's on TV." She elaborated:

The attention being paid to the case and the issue, I actually think has a lot more to do with the nature of the crime and the nature of the person and the fact that she was on TV selling safety, selling domesticity, selling comfort and then she turns around and this is how she's actually living her life.

Wynne agreed with Maribel and similarly argued:

But people have this impression of homemaker-domestic equals like innocent-pure, so when she's pitching all of this and then she does something that's like the contrary of that, I think that's one of the reasons like this is such a big deal. Because if it was another woman who wasn't, who never really promoted being domestic or anything like that, like any actress, famous actress or whatever, I don't think people would have such a tough time with it.

In a different interview group, Bethany raised the same issue and suggested that it is “really ironic that she was like the representation of the perfect world and the perfect everything and then it doesn’t work out that way.” Lauren added that what was formerly Stewart’s perfect persona is “being tarnished” by the ImClone scandal.

Many of the Martha fans were so angered with what they perceived as mistreatment of Stewart through the progression of the investigation and trial that some who had previously had negative feelings about Stewart softened their positions. Rachel, who had previously said she had difficulty watching Stewart because she seemed arrogant, now said:

I feel bad for her and everything . . . what she did, sure, it was a crappy thing, but yeah there were several times where I, I’d just kind of tune out after a while because I just don’t want to listen to the media say “yes, this is deserved of her” because I really wonder, is it? Or is it more like a response, of like there’s this open opportunity to catch someone who maybe isn’t at their best and let’s go with it. And that, I mean that, that’s the feeling that sits with me, with her, so that’s why I do feel bad. And especially just the idea that she’s going to see jail time.

Jackie, who had previously called Stewart, “the bitch of life,” expressed that she felt Stewart was treated unfairly in comparison to male corporate executives: “I resent how she’s been, being handled as opposed to the way, like, Kenny Boy Lay, and Skilling and all those folks.” Elaine, with whom I spoke about one week after Stewart was sentenced to prison, who had previously said she couldn’t stand Stewart, indicated that the ImClone scandal had softened her feelings for Stewart, if only minutely, “if you had asked me six months ago before her court date, and [before] it became such an issue, I wouldn’t have given two hoots.” Abby was perhaps the most sympathetic of all of the non-fans. I spoke to Abby soon after Stewart was sentenced, and she reflected upon the changes in her feelings about Stewart:

It's interesting because I like her more now, I'm much more sympathetic and empathetic to Martha now, much more so. She's softened and now my thoughts about Martha Stewart are more about that she's been targeted as a strong dynamic woman in a sexist society . . . there's so many men who have done so much wrong . . . and that she's been targeted and I feel, I want to like rescue her and I feel like, there was, I don't know, has anybody seen the t-shirt, like there were some t-shirts about like . . . "Save Martha?" I was like, I want to wear a Save Martha t-shirt, I mean I really feel like she was targeted and I feel really bad.

When I asked the *Living* fans if the way their mostly positive attitudes about Stewart and her lifestyle suggestions would change if she was found guilty, almost all of them said "no." Candace explained her position this way: "she's not my moral compass, I'm just going to her for information and I like the way it's presented." Delores agreed, "It's entertainment for me." Isabel also suggested that the ImClone matter would not change her mind about Stewart because "we will never know the truth. Everyone makes mistakes." Nadia, who answered my question after Stewart had been found guilty, also maintained that the decision did not change her position about Stewart "at all;" she said: "I would still watch her show, yeah I don't care. If it's on when she's out of jail or whatever, I'll watch it, I don't care." Kira suggested that she would watch Stewart if she returned to television after her prison sentence: "if she comes back on, I'm sure I'll look for more gardening tips."

Through the ImClone scandal, both the *Living* fans and the Martha fans amended their positions on *Martha Stewart Living* and Martha Stewart. *Living* fans articulated their frustration with the negative public construction of Martha Stewart. Whereas the impact of this negative construction had previously made them reluctant to openly communicate their interest in Stewart's media texts, the public discourse about Stewart's alleged mistreatment through ImClone gave them the impetus to discuss their interest in her.

Martha fans, partially responsible for the negative public construction of Martha Stewart, softened their critiques of Stewart and supported her through critiques of the US legal and media systems and their unfair treatment of Stewart because of her gender and celebrity. Through the ImClone scandal, therefore, Stewart's power and authority lessened and the public blamed her alleged mistreatment on gender discrimination—this explanation was supported by both traditionally feminine and contemporary feminist discourses and thus both *Living* and Martha fans supported her. As both fan groups rallied around Martha Stewart, the distinctions between them narrowed.

Conclusion

Ien Ang (1985), in her study of *Dallas* fans who expressed both love and hate for the show, offered that hating and loving are “only labels people stick on the way in which they relate in general to the programme” (p. 13). Ang suggested that these labels, far from being unambiguous descriptions of fan positions, relate to the ways in which viewers react to a text. She argued that inevitably viewers' experiences of a text are “ambivalent and contradictory” (p. 13). In my study of *Martha Stewart Living* audience members, I found the ambivalence and contradiction Ang describes. I was able to isolate two distinct audiences: one who loved Stewart's texts and one who hated Martha Stewart; however, in neither case were these categories stable—conflicted fans moved between groups, especially as the ImClone scandal progressed.

If, as Joli Jensen (1992) and Matt Hills (2002) argue, fandom is not simply a noun, but is a lens through which we can understand how audiences make sense of the world they live in, my respondents' views of Martha Stewart's persona and media messages explain their perspectives on their particular locations in US culture. Fans'

interest in Stewart is necessarily complex, but breaking their interests down into gender, sexuality, race, and class allowed me to examine relevant aspects of the pull they felt to Stewart.

The range of positions *Living* and Martha fans took in their discussions reflects the ideologies circulating through larger debates in US culture. For example, with gender, *Living* and Martha fans disagreed over the place Stewart's domestic suggestions should have in contemporary US women's and men's lives; their discussions reflect Cynthia Duquette Smith's (2000) concern that "MSLO's rhetoric constitutes a subject who is domesticated by the press of home responsibilities even if she also works outside the home" (p. 343). The participants also questioned the role femininity should play in women's lives through their analysis of Stewart's persona; their critiques of Stewart reflect the kinds of criticism powerful women regularly receive, and support Karrin Vasby Anderson's (1999) argument that sexist stereotypes in American culture trap "women in the double bind between femininity and competence" (p. 600).

With sexuality, *Living* and Martha fans demonstrated the continuing strength of stereotypes by using them to imagine Stewart's audience as well as Stewart's own sexual identity. Gay and lesbian fans used the ambiguity in Stewart's texts and persona to construct alternative readings, which demonstrates, as Alexander Doty (1995) argues, "Queer positions, queer readings, and queer pleasures are part of a reception space that stands simultaneously beside and within that created by heterosexual and straight positions" (p. 83).

Discussions of whiteness dominated fans' discussions of race. Fans agreed that Stewart's success was based in part on her racial identification; the cultural prominence

of whiteness in US culture gave Stewart authority to speak credibly about issues of class and taste, suggesting as Sut Jhally and Justin Lewis (1992) do that race and class are intertwined in the United States. Stewart's attempts to teach "culture" by including non-white ideas and suggestions were applauded by *Living* fans who appreciated Stewart's attempt to represent a diversity of cultural traditions, and criticized by Martha fans who worried that Stewart's inclusion of cultural, ethnic, and racial differences would "be continually commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate...." (hooks, 1992, p. 39).

Through discussions of class and taste, both fan groups indicated the degree to which class aspiration was an important component in Stewart's popularity and their interest in her texts, suggesting that Stewart is contributing to what Juliet Schor (2003) calls "the new consumerism," which involves "an upscaling of lifestyle norms; the pervasiveness of conspicuous, status goods ... and the growing disconnect between consumer desires and incomes" (p. 185). Despite *Living* fans' desire to emulate Stewart, the way Martha fans related to Stewart's class suggests animosity for those who are more privileged remains an important component of US culture.

When Martha Stewart, and her texts as a result, were threatened with legal action and received extremely negative media attention, the differences between the groups lessened and both *Living* and Martha fans rallied to support Stewart against what they believed was unfair treatment. This movement, in response to real threats to *Martha Stewart Living* and Martha Stewart, suggests that it may not be useful to study fans as stable categories, but instead it may be more fruitful to study what fan beliefs and practices mean and how they function culturally. In this case, the fan positions taken

before ImClone suggest that the devaluation of Stewart's public persona, and the lifestyle suggestions on which her texts are based, especially in relation to Stewart's sex and gender, was strong enough to keep *Living* fans silent. Ridicule of Stewart, an activity practiced by Martha fans, thus served to discipline Stewart's power and delegitimize the focus of her media texts, namely domestic information and projects. Both fan groups changed their positions in the context of the ImClone scandal, which reduced Stewart's power and positioned her as a victim; both fan groups believe Stewart was mistreated and thus rallied to support her.

Fan positions and media texts are never stable or final. Studying audiences as classifiable groups keeps us from understanding the ways in which audiences adapt to texts over time and keeps us from truly understanding media texts. In March 2005, Stewart was released from Alderson Federal Prison for Women to enormous media fanfare; it seems that Stewart's willingness to accept punishment, even as her appeal was being considered, made her a more likeable figure. I discuss Stewart's return in the following chapter.

Notes

¹ The names of the people I interviewed have been changed to conceal their identities.

² Many of my interview groups, however, did include lesbian Martha Stewart fans, though I did not specifically attempt to do so.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In early 2002, when I started this project, Stewart was a self-made billionaire and the company she created, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO), was a \$295 million-a-year business (Carr, 2003, p. C5). MSLO reached over 90 million people a month through a number of formats: magazines, television programs, the World Wide Web, books, radio programs, newspaper columns, and licensed products (O'Neill, 1999, para. 8). Martha Stewart's rag-to-riches story, know-it-all demeanor, and elite tastes were the foundation of MSLO's success, but Stewart's public persona raised questions about the roles Americans are comfortable seeing women occupy. Tabloids, tell-all biographies and made-for-TV movies offered to reveal the "truth" about Stewart: she had a strained relationship with her family she intimidated her staff and she became successful by stealing others' ideas. Underneath many of these critiques lay the ways in which Martha Stewart's public persona confused gender norms. Stewart was an expert in the business of domesticity, yet her public persona as a successful businesswoman eschewed all that is feminine. My initial goal was to examine Stewart's popularity and the way in which her texts contained and her audiences interpreted gender, race, and class discourses in *Martha Stewart Living*.

However, the public criticism of Stewart intensified when allegations that Stewart had improperly sold her personal holdings of ImClone stock surfaced in June 2002. The allegations severely damaged Stewart's public persona; and Stewart's media texts, thoroughly based on Stewart, were forced to adapt to the news of Stewart's indictment in June 2003 and her conviction in March 2004. Stewart's audiences also responded to her

involvement in the ImClone scandal and to the changes they saw in *Martha Stewart Living*. Through it all, I was uniquely poised to examine the changes to Stewart's persona, texts, and audiences through the ImClone scandal.

I believe that my findings provide support for Leavitt's (2002) assertion that the works of domestic advisors contain informative traces of the ideologies circulating in the cultures from which they emerge. Building on the work of audience scholars who examine the fans of devalued media texts, I interviewed Stewart's fans to understand the ways in which they interpreted the ideologies of gender, race, and class they encountered in *Martha Stewart Living*. My analysis of Stewart's texts and examination of Stewart's audiences offers a rich account of American culture at the turn of the twenty-first century. Below I discuss the findings, contributions, and limitations of my textual analysis and reception study, and discuss future plans for my research. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of Stewart's effort to rebuild Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia and speculate about Stewart's future success.

Summary of Findings

In Chapter Two I discussed my project's three theoretical foundations: American mass communication studies, British cultural studies, and feminist scholarship. The methods I used to analyze Stewart's magazines and television programs (textual and ideological analysis) and to explore the meanings Stewart's audiences took from *Living* (reception studies) were drawn from these three traditions. Stuart Hall's (1980b) Encoding/Decoding model, which posits that media texts are produced as meaningful at the juncture where the text and the audience meet, structures my analysis of encoding in Chapter Three and my examination of decoding in Chapter Four. Below I combine these

analyses to discuss the continuities and discontinuities among the dominant themes in my analysis of Stewart's texts and Stewart's fans' interpretations of *Martha Stewart Living*. Both chapters suggest that discourses of gender, race, and class work in unison in *Martha Stewart Living*.

Messages about gender, work, and domesticity are conflicted in *Living*, in part because Stewart's magazines and television programs invite new audiences and alternate readings by addressing men's interests in domesticity and by limiting the representations of heterosexuality and family commonly found in traditional women's magazines. Despite the relative openness for new audiences and readings, *Living*'s dominant audience is heterosexual women. Acknowledging that "the 'working woman' [is now] the rule rather than the exception" (Schor, 1991, p. 226), Stewart creates a space to celebrate women's achievements in the workplace, particularly through discussion and representation of the successes of her own career. Stewart also works to bring a new respectability to work in the home, but does so by professionalizing homekeeping techniques and raising homekeeping standards, all of which contribute to women's domestic burdens. In total, *Living*'s messages about women's paid employment and domestic responsibilities demonstrate how contemporary American women's lives are changing, yet in many ways remain defined by domesticity.

The fans in my focus group interviews clashed over the gender roles represented in *Martha Stewart Living*, particularly when discussing the place of domesticity and femininity in contemporary women's lives. It is clear that Stewart tapped into some fans' "ambivalent feelings with respect to home and work life" (Smith, 2002, p. 352), and offended others who criticized Stewart for suggesting that the home should be the center

of women's lives. Many of my respondents struggled with the tensions between femininity and feminism, which they expressed in their appraisals of Martha Stewart, chiding her for not being thoroughly feminine, while valuing that her success as a businesswoman came, in part, through the expression of more masculine attributes. Gay and lesbian fans recognized and appreciated the openness *Living's* portrayal of Stewart's (relatively) non-traditional lifestyle created for alternate readings of Stewart's magazines and television programs.

The messages about race and ethnicity in Stewart's magazines and television programs are less complex. Through its relative absence of non-white faces, *Living* asserts a privileged whiteness presented as American traditions. These traditions consist of a variety of artifacts and customs from European-derived, Christian cultures, supporting Richard Dyer's (1997) assertion that "in Western representation whites are overwhelmingly and disproportionately dominant, have the central and elaborated roles, and above all are placed as the norm, the ordinary, the standard" (p. 3). When Stewart's magazines and television programs do include non-white cultures, these representations tend to be limited and stereotyped; these narrow representations are "part of the maintenance of social and symbolic order" (Hall, 1997b, p. 258).

The fans that recognized that Stewart's appeal was based in part on her whiteness felt it contributed to her credibility as an arbiter of good taste, suggesting that race and class are closely intertwined. Many fans enjoyed articles and segments in which Stewart displays her ethnic heritage, especially if they shared her Polish background. Fans both criticized and praised Stewart for her attempts to include cultures outside her own; some

accused Stewart of misrepresenting non-white cultures while others commended Stewart for featuring non-white cultures.

Representations of class in *Living* are framed with Stewart's own transition from working-class New Jersey roots to the privileged life she leads as one of the most successful female entrepreneurs in the United States. Stewart's story of class mobility positions her as "the quintessential enterprising citizen" who has achieved the American Dream, and encourages her readers and viewers to desire the grandeur her texts contain (Shaw, 2003, p. 60). Though *Living*'s articles and episodes do include modest and do-it-yourself projects, the bulk of Stewart's images and ideas spotlight a fantasy world full of leisure and luxury that suggests that "class status is gained, lost, and reproduced in part through everyday acts of consumer behavior" (Schor, 2003, p. 191). I argue that the dominant class discourses in *Living* inspire upscale emulation and hold out the promise that readers and viewers who carefully follow Stewart's suggestions can raise their class positions, just as Stewart did.

Many of the mostly middle-class fans I interviewed were drawn to what they perceived as an elite taste level in Stewart's magazines and television programs and felt that their exposure to Stewart would increase their cultural capital. Some fans suggested they read and watched *Living* in part to fulfill their fantasies of class aspirations, though they infrequently put Stewart's lifestyle suggestions to work in their own lives. While many fans enjoyed the opportunity to peek into Stewart's life, some were put off by what they perceived to be Stewart's "uppity" manner. This frustration with Stewart's privilege may stem from the increasingly large "aspirational gap" between Stewart and her

audiences, as more Americans find that competitive consumption has made their desires greater than their incomes (Schor, 2003, p. 186).

While many fans agreed on the aspects of their interest in Stewart's texts, my focus group interviews revealed that Stewart's fans are not identical and not easily classifiable. As I began analyzing my interviews, I found that Stewart's fans exhibited at least two different types of characteristics. One group was primarily interested in *Martha Stewart Living* the text, and the other was primarily interested in following and critiquing Martha Stewart's public persona. Neither group entirely fit agreed upon descriptions of fan behavior (see Jenkins, 1988; Tulloch & Jenkins, 1995).

Though the patterns for two distinct types of fans emerged as my interviews progressed, the media attention Stewart received through the ImClone scandal provoked changes in the fans' positions, raising questions about the way the term "fan" has been conceptualized. My discussion of Stewart's fans, as a result, is necessarily more complex than I had expected it would be when my project began. My findings suggest that audience scholars should take a closer look at how fan practices and beliefs evolve in fans' lives and in the larger culture.

Implications and Contributions

Through my work on this dissertation, I have sought to examine the role Martha Stewart's media messages play in the lives of those who use them. This goal, and the approach I have used to reach it, are influenced by the ritual view of communication, derived in part from John Dewey and explored in the work of James Carey. Carey (1982) viewed communication as a process through which reality is created: "Communication is at once a structure of human action – activity, process, practice – an ensemble of

expressive forms, and a structured and structuring set of relations” (p. 31). Carey (1982) called this view of communication “the ritual view” and suggested that scholars who wish to study communication processes through this lens should examine “the practices that organize communications, the concepts such practices presuppose and the social relations they bring into existence” (1982, p. 30). Carey believed that the fundamental form of power in culture is “the power to define, allocate, and display” (1982, p. 32), and he isolated the media as an important “site of conflict over the real” (1982, p. 33). Carey’s “ritual view” structured my project by giving me a framework with which I could investigate the ways Martha Stewart’s fans shape and are shaped by the ideologies present in Stewart’s media messages. Through the words of my respondents, Carey’s “ritual view” took shape as I connected the positions and practices of Stewart’s fans to the larger social and cultural world they inhabited.

While Carey’s work gave me a theoretical lens through which I could think about the communicative impact of media messages, Stuart Hall’s (1980b) “Encoding/Decoding” model, which Gurevitch and Scannell (2003) call “the ur-text of media studies” (p. 232), gave me a model with which I could examine the ways ideology works in Stewart’s texts and through her audience members. Though the model has been critiqued for its assertion of a preferred reading in media texts, its conflation of comprehension and evaluation, and its overestimation of polysemy (see Morley, 2006, pp. 109-110), I agree with David Morley (2006) that “the model, despite its limitations, still has much to offer” (p. 111). In the context of my dissertation, “Encoding/Decoding” allowed me to examine the relationships between the messages of a text and the audience who interprets them. As Hall suggests, I have found the relationship between encoding

and decoding to be relatively autonomous: though ideology is reproduced through the encoding process, the polysemy of a text allows audiences to decode media texts in line through their cultural competencies and interpretive communities.

While I did not incorporate Hall's three decoding positions into my analysis of fans' responses, it is clear that my respondents produced dominant, negotiated and oppositional readings. For example, though some fans praised Stewart's perceived reclamation of the domestic sphere, others condemned it. Gay and lesbian fans recognized the subtle openness for queer readings that existed in Stewart's texts; accessing cultural competencies my other respondents did not have, gay and lesbian fans saw Stewart as campy and suggested that Stewart may be a lesbian. Nearly all of the fans I interviewed saw *Martha Stewart Living* as a predominantly white text; and though Stewart's texts do display some moments of appreciation for multiculturalism (including Stewart's Polish background), fans were divided by how they understood those moments. Some praised Stewart for the inclusion and others criticized her. Similarly, fans recognized Stewart's representations of elite taste in her magazines and television programs; while some denounced Stewart for being "uppity," most felt a degree of frustration over their own material conditions in comparison with Stewart's images of luxury. Though my work does not necessarily extend "Encoding/Decoding," I believe the model usefully served as the backbone of my analysis and that my work speaks to the continued relevance of the model. This supports Morley's suggestion that "the value of the [Encoding/Decoding] model is to be judged not simply in its own terms, but with reference to the subsequent body of work that it has spawned and enabled" (Morley, 2006, p. 113).

The “encoding” portion of my dissertation yields important examples of the ways in which ideologies of gender, affluence, and whiteness take material form in media messages and I hope that these examples will inform future ideological and textual analyses. My work is also a reminder that in a field of study dominated with analyses of prime-time television programs and film, daytime television and magazines are ripe for analysis. Though the world of daytime TV is often discounted for being unimaginative and unsophisticated, my research reveals interesting examples in *Living* that challenge mainstream ideologies. Future work in popular culture should value the everyday and seemingly mundane just as much as the new and extraordinary.

The “decoding” portion of my dissertation, in addition to being an exemplar, makes important contributions in developing areas of fan studies. In my work on Martha Stewart’s texts and fans, I have tried to illuminate the ways in which fans’ relationships to *Martha Stewart Living* demonstrate how they make sense of the world in which they live. In this sense, I believe my work supports Joli Jensen’s (1992) and Matt Hills’ (2002) calls for audience scholars to reconceptualize fandom as performative instead of a set of characteristics displayed. In this way, fandom functions culturally to reveal our social and cultural locations in the world. Thus, I was less interested in what Stewart’s fans did with *Martha Stewart Living* and more interested in what their interpretation of Stewart’s texts means—how it reveals how they understand and experience the world.

Additionally, my work challenges the previously narrow conception of “fan” and offers an example of fan attitudes and practices that change over time and to accommodate changes in the structure and content of media texts. Similarly, my examination of Martha fans builds upon Jonathan Gray’s (2003) notion of “anti-fans.”

Gray argues that an examination of anti-fans involves studying “what expectations and what values structure media consumption” (2003, p. 73). Certainly my respondents’ expressions of dislike for Stewart and her texts highlight the values they expect and detest in the media in general; for example, Martha fans reacted negatively to moments of *Martha Stewart Living* they believed conveyed traditional views of women’s roles in the home and positioned whiteness and elite taste as normative. I believe my work strengthens Gray’s suggestion that this developing area of study will give audience researchers a new entry point to focus on “the range of everyday viewers’ values, and on how they interact with media consumption, use and meaning” (2003, p. 73).

Fans’ responses to Martha Stewart as a public figure demonstrate the ways in which female celebrities continue to serve as litmus tests for the values women are expected to emulate. Though Stewart is not a Hollywood star, she was repeatedly evaluated on her beauty and talent. As a wife and a mother, Stewart was deemed a failure. Like many powerful women in the public eye, Stewart was criticized for seeming too powerful or masculine. In fact, there was no comfortable place for Stewart to occupy until the ImClone scandal, when supporters repeatedly insisted Stewart was being unfairly treated in the media. Whereas Stewart had been repeatedly criticized for not successfully meeting society’s cultural expectations for womanhood before ImClone, she was defended through ImClone for the ways in which she was being legally prosecuted and publicly judged for not successfully meeting society’s cultural expectations. I believe my work in this dissertation makes it clear that the double binds many scholars have previously identified (see Jamieson 1995, and Anderson, 1999) are still strong forces shaping women’s choices in the United States; untangling the criticisms of Stewart

before, during, and after ImClone is work I will continue to do as I revise my work. Next, I discuss additional revisions I hope to undertake.

Limitations and Future Directions

An important goal of my project was to examine how gender, race, class, and sexuality operated in and through Martha Stewart's media texts and the interpretations Stewart's audience made of her texts. While I believe that my examination of the ways gender, race, class and sexuality individually impacted Stewart's texts and audiences, my findings would have been strengthened had I examined more fully the ways in which these components of social identities are intersectional.

Stephanie A. Shields (2008) argues that intersectionality is a "central tenet of feminist thinking" that demands that "the individual's social location as reflected in intersecting identities must be at the forefront in any investigation of gender" (p. 301). While feminist scholars remain dedicated to intersectionality as a theory, researching, interpreting, and representing intersectional identities has proven to be methodologically challenging. These challenges stem from and are represented by "... a paucity of literature on intersectionality from a methodological perspective" (Bowleg, 2008, p. 313). As a result of the difficulty of doing feminist research from an intersectional perspective, much work has been "additive," or layered (Shields, 2008, p. 303). I believe my work in this dissertation falls into this additive category.

In revising my work for publication, I would very much like to correct this, and a recent special issue of *Sex Roles* (September 2008) dedicated to intersectionality will help me begin to rethink my analysis. In this special issue, Lisa Bowleg argues that "addition is often a critical step in preliminary analysis" (p. 319). Thus, in revision of my project, I

hope to build on the additive analysis in this dissertation to create a more sophisticated analysis of the ways in which gender, race, class, and sexuality work simultaneously in Stewart's texts and audience's reception of Stewart's texts. As the intersectionality literature reveals, this is no small undertaking, but Bowleg (2008) offers an important piece of guidance: "the key interpretive task is to derive meaning from the observed data on the one hand, and to on the other, interpret this individual level data within a larger sociohistorical context of structural inequality that may not be explicit or directly observable in the data" (p. 320).

The examination of a larger sociohistorical context of structural inequality an intersectional perspective demands will likely help me to correct another limitation in this dissertation: the absence of a history of domestic work and workers. While I placed Martha Stewart within the historical context of domestic advisors, my focus inadvertently concealed the fact that much domestic labor in the North American and Western European contexts has been performed by non-white, working class, and immigrant women. Placing Martha Stewart, her lifestyle suggestions, and her audience within a detailed account of the history of domestic workers would undoubtedly help contextualize many of the issues raised by Stewart's texts and audiences, and would strengthen many of the arguments I have made (and could have made) concerning race and class.

Work by Daniel E. Sutherland (1981) and Faye Dudden (1983) will give me background on domestic work in the United States during the nineteenth century, and work by Phyllis M. Palmer (1989) and Linda Martin and Kerry Segrave (1985) offers information about domestic workers in the United States during the twentieth century.

Bridget Anderson (2000), Grace Chang (2000), and Rhacel Salazar Parreñas (2001), examine the connections between immigrant domestic labor and globalization, which will give an international perspective to my work. Additionally, work by Angela Davis (1998), Judith Rollins (1985), and Mary Romero (1992) will add depth and context to a sociohistorical examination of domestic work. These books will give me a starting point for constructing a rich history of domestic work and workers to help me develop this important addition to my work.

Additionally, I wish I had more fully contextualized and explored the concept of a “Yankee,” a clear definition of which I struggled to find. I believe that many of the characteristics of Stewart’s values and suggestions, particularly pertaining to antiques and making new from old, stem directly from Stewart’s experience in and reverence for New England. However, because I struggled to document these aspects of Yankee culture, I hesitated to articulate the connections I saw between a New England aesthetic and Stewart’s taste and lifestyle suggestions. As I revise my work for publication, I would like to further explore Yankee culture as it relates to Stewart’s taste. Finally, as I move forward with this project, I look forward to strengthening my analysis with the above improvements and incorporating the changes that evolved in Stewart’s persona and texts after she was released from Alderson federal prison. Below, I conclude with a discussion of some of these changes.

ImClone and Beyond

As I argue in Chapter Four, Stewart’s indictment and conviction raised the stakes for *Living* and Martha fans alike, pushing many who were unwilling to support Stewart in the past to notice the ways in which the public treatment of Stewart may have had more

to do with the fact that she is a woman and a celebrity than with her crimes. As Karrin Vasby Anderson (1999) argues, many American women in positions of power struggle to “cultivate an image of competence and leadership without being dismissed as a ‘bitch’” (p. 599). While Stewart had regularly been critiqued in the US media for being cold, obsessive, and aggressive—all positive characteristics of successful male entrepreneurs—Stewart’s perfectionism, “designed to situate her beyond repute” shielded her from feeling any serious effects from the public ridicule (Shaw, 2003, p. 57). The controversy that emerged in June 2002 over Stewart’s personal sale of her ImClone stock fractured her image, opened her to increased criticism, and threatened to destroy her company. As Stewart’s trial began in January 2004, feminist cultural critics and Stewart’s fans raised questions about the fairness of Stewart’s treatment in the legal system and in the media.

Many argued that the seriousness of Stewart’s case paled in comparison to the more egregious crimes of the Enron, Worldcom and Tyco CEOs whose crimes were national news at the same time Stewart’s case was. The media coverage of the indictment and trial seemed to reiterate and confirm a popular characterization of Stewart as a rich, white bitch who gets her way, no matter the cost.¹ *Ms. Magazine*’s Elaine Lafferty (2004), who readily admitted that Stewart “never made the short list for Ms. Woman of the Year” (para. 1) came to Stewart’s defense, calling the indictment and conviction a “bitch hunt” (para. 10).

Carol Stabile’s (2004) analysis of over 1200 newspaper articles found that “the amount of attention devoted to Stewart was disproportionate to the newsworthiness of the case” (p. 318) and that many articles used “noxious, misogynistic language” in their descriptions of Stewart’s involvement in the ImClone scandal (p. 319). Gauchat and Rill

(2005) echo Stabile's findings in their analysis of articles in *The New York Times* and *USA Today*, and argue that the negative accounts of Stewart in the media were "clearly focused on something other than her ImClone involvement" and that American culture "is still not prepared to handle a woman fulfilling both a domestic and [an] executive business role" (p. 26).

These accounts suggest that the inequitable attention Stewart received as the news of her involvement in the ImClone scandal unfolded is based in part upon the gendered, raced, and classed contradictions that my textual analysis and fan interviews revealed. Simultaneously domestic advisor and media mogul, Stewart's public persona displayed the contradictions with which many contemporary American women live. These gender contradictions, paired with Stewart's elite whiteness, were at the heart of the many critiques of Stewart before the ImClone scandal. Then, Stewart was largely protected from these critiques by her "good girl" status, which allowed her to succeed in "a man's world"—a capitalist system based upon "class stratification, sexism, and racism" (Stabile, 2004, p. 317) that Stabile (2004) argues "Stewart wholeheartedly embraced" before ImClone (p. 317).

Stewart's perfectionism was tarnished by the ImClone scandal, and her treatment in the media demonstrated the strength of the dominant ideologies of gender that structure women's and men's daily lives. Stabile (2004) argues that "Stewart never conformed to these gendered codes of conduct: she never exhibited the conduct of care ... she had a reputation for being hard as nails ... and she did not exude warmth" (p. 317). Caught in a culture holding tightly to strict gender norms, Stewart became one in a long line of bitches whom Americans have sought to publicly discipline (Anderson,

1998). The glee with which many media reports celebrated Stewart's conviction and sentencing suggest in Stabile's (2004) words, that Stewart "had somehow 'asked for it'—she had turned herself into a brand, she had sold out the domestic sphere, she was too confident, too 'brash,' too much." (p. 328). Faced with the destruction of her reputation and media empire, Stewart accepted her punishment and reported to Alderson Federal Prison (nicknamed "Camp Cupcake") ahead of schedule. Publicly, Stewart's will appeared to be broken, but privately she was planning a big return; but not even Stewart could have predicted how successful that return would be.

Stewart After Imclone

Stewart's release from Alderson Federal Prison dominated the US print and electronic media over the weekend of March 4-6, 2005. Television viewers could watch Stewart leave the prison in her SUV and board the private jet that would fly her to her home in Bedford, New York, where she would serve five months of house arrest.² Reporters camped out at Stewart's Bedford estate and followed her as she walked her property, greeted her horses, and emerged from her palatial greenhouse with her arms full of Meyer lemons, a symbol of Stewart's desire to make lemonade out of lemons. Thereafter, journalists filed story after story claiming that Americans love a comeback tale and ultimately wanted Martha Stewart to rebound. *New York Times'* columnist Maureen Dowd (2005) argued that Americans' fascination with Stewart's release from prison was rooted in Stewart's reputation for being a strong woman: "Americans like to see women who wear the pants be beaten up and humiliated. Afterward, in a gratifying redemption ritual, people like to see the battered women be rewarded" (para. 2).

At the time of Stewart's release, Stewart's previous decision to report to Alderson ahead of schedule looked like part of a well-crafted plan to revitalize Stewart's public image and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, which had lost \$60 million in 2004 (Naughton, 2005, p. 39). Frustrated with Chief Operating Officer Sharon Patrick's plan to "de-Martha-ize" Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia's magazines, television programs, and licensed products (Sellers, 2005, p. 104), Stewart added former CEO of EMI Record Group's North American division Charles Koppelman, and former head of ABC entertainment Susan Lyne, to MSLO's board of directors in March 2004 and June 2004, respectively.³

These additions to the board gave Stewart leverage over Sharon Patrick and more control of her company's future at a time when Stewart's ImClone stock sale had made MSLO's future uncertain. Working with Koppelman and Lyne, Stewart crafted a comeback plan that included her decision to begin her prison sentence early. Just before Stewart's September 15, 2004 announcement that she was ready to begin her prison sentence, Stewart signed a five-year MSLO contract with an annual salary of \$900,000, a \$200,000 signing bonus, an annual \$100,000 expense account, and a company-paid car and driver. Her title would become founder, chief editorial and media director of MSLO (Bloomberg, 2004, para. 1-4). Despite Stewart's conviction, Kmart was persuaded to extend its relationship with Stewart through 2009 (Sellers, 2005, p. 122). With rumors about a television deal with Mark Burnett in the works, *Fortune's* Patricia Sellers (2004) speculated that Stewart's decision to serve her time early would allow Stewart to be out of prison in time to shoot a fall program (para. 1). Though Stewart had little control over the outcome of her legal problems, and the media coverage of them, she had, in line with

her perfectionist public persona, strategically orchestrated her comeback before she left for prison.

Stewart's prison confinement did not keep her out of the public eye. Journalists worked to reveal Stewart's life behind bars, reporting that Stewart had picked crab apples from Alderson Prison's grounds to make jelly ("Martha Stirs," 2004, para. 1), that Stewart had been learning to cook in a microwave, and that Stewart had lost a Christmas decorating contest (Piccalo, 2005, para. 2). Stewart wrote her own account of prison life shortly after she reported to Alderson on October 8, 2004: "The camp is fine; it is pretty much what I anticipated. The best news – everyone is nice – both the officials and my fellow inmates. I have adjusted and am very busy. The camp is like an old-fashioned college campus – without the freedom, of course" (Stewart, 2004c, para. 2).

News of Stewart's comeback plan made the news as well. In February 2005, Mark Burnett announced that Stewart's daytime show would be rejuvenated by putting Stewart in front of a live studio audience and that a new prime-time program would follow the format of *The Apprentice* (Piccalo, 2005, para. 8). The media's and Wall Street's evaluations of Stewart's plan for recovery were so overwhelmingly positive that "by the time [Stewart] left prison, her stock had more than doubled and she was a billionaire once again" (Tyrnauer, 2005, p. 179).

After Stewart's release into house arrest in March 2005, more details of MSLO's recovery plan emerged. Stewart returned to the cover and pages of *Martha Stewart Living* in April 2005, and though her former columns (and her name's position on the magazine's cover) were not restored upon her return, Stewart debuted a new monthly column, "From my home to yours." The column's title was ironic (Stewart was literally

confined to her home for the first five months of the column), but was intended to reestablish Stewart's presence in the magazine and her direct connection to her readers. She suggested the focus of the column would be "to give you more how-to ideas to use in your own home—more favorite recipes, tips, and Good Things, from my home to yours. Your letters have told me again and again that this is what you count on me for" (Stewart, 2005, p. 32).

In July 2005, Stewart signed a contract worth \$2 million dollars to write an advice manual for entrepreneurs, called *Martha's Rules*, and signed a contract worth \$7.5 million a year for four years with Sirius Satellite Radio to create Stewart's own 24/7 channel (Gogoi, 2005a, para. 8). Stewart also had plans for a new furniture line with Kmart, a partnership with KB Homes to build Martha Stewart-branded residential communities, and a line of DVDs with Warner Home Video ("Betting On," 2005, para. 1). By the time Stewart's home confinement ended on August 31, 2005, her daytime show had been ordered by 98% of the television stations in the US (Carter, 2005, para. 9), and Gallup had reported that Stewart was more popular than she had been six years prior—a sign that her fans had stuck with her through her difficulties and that she may have won some new fans (Carr, 2005, para. 11).

Martha, Stewart's new daytime program produced by NBC Universal, debuted on September 12, 2005. The episode began with a conversation between Stewart and Executive Producer Mark Burnett, in which Burnett asks Stewart if she is ready for the new program. She enthusiastically responds that she is ready and that she is excited about the show's first celebrity guest, Marcia Cross. Burnett tells Stewart that Cross' character on *Desperate Housewives*, Bree Van De Kamp, was based in part on Stewart (the

character is fixated on the achievement of domestic perfectionism and projecting a good image to her neighbors). Burnett shows Stewart a clip from *Desperate Housewives* to prove his point. While audiences may have expected a scene in which Bree Van De Kamp is cooking, cleaning, or passing judgment on others, the scene consists of Van De Kamp in lacy lingerie attempting to seduce her estranged husband. When the clip ends, Stewart looks directly at the camera and affirms “that is totally me.” The audience cheers loudly and the pre-recorded intro sequence begins.

Unlike Stewart’s former programs that began with classical music, *Martha* begins with Swing Out Sister’s (1992) remake of Dusty Springfield’s “Am I the same girl.” The lyrics offer viewers an invitation: “Why don’t you stop/And look me over/Am I the same girl you used to know?/Why don’t you stop/And think it over/Am I the same girl who you hurt so?” The chorus asks the question “Am I the same girl?” and affirms “Yes I am, Yes I am.” The 40-second opening displays numerous images of Stewart’s childhood, young adulthood, and early career. Some of Stewart’s modeling pictures are blown up life-size and she playfully mimics the poses in them. A smiling Stewart breaks through a larger-than-life cover of her first book, *Entertaining*, and Stewart embraces her mother and daughter, and plays with two of her dogs. The opening sequence references her recent troubles as well, displaying images of Stewart being led by police officers and Stewart as she was released from Alderson. *Martha*’s introduction simultaneously assures viewers that Stewart is the same and also projects Stewart as something new: playful, down-to-earth, family-oriented, sexy, and beautiful (Burnett, 2005).

MSLO’s strategy for creating a new Martha Stewart was to make her nicer, not-so-perfect and, in Mark Burnett’s words, to “bring out a new playfulness” in Stewart

(Greppi, 2005, para. 3). This attempt to soften Stewart's image, as Anderson (1999) notes has been commonly utilized by women publicly labeled as bitches (p. 610). *CNN.com* (2005) acknowledges this change in Stewart's new television programs and suggests MSLO's strategy aimed "to introduce her as a new Martha, a better-than-ever Martha ... in marked contrast to the chilly, uptight perfectionist she was seen as before, even by some of her biggest fans" ("Everything's Coming," 2005, para. 9).

The new Martha Stewart joked on the premiere episode of *Martha* that she appreciated the utility of her ankle bracelet tracking device (required for home detention) so much that she bought one for each member of the show's staff to make sure she could find them when she wanted them (Burnett, 2005). On later episodes, Stewart demonstrated the microwaveable meals she purportedly made while at Alderson (Stanley, 2005, para. 5), and organized an entire episode of *Martha* with the studio audience filled with women (and a few dogs) named Martha Stewart (Hinds, 2005, para. 13).

The change in Stewart's persona was not lost on cultural critics. *Advertising Age's* Larry Dobrow (2006) called Stewart's image "MSLO Version 2.0, the beloved semi-underdog" (para. 5). *The New York Times's* Alessandra Stanley (2005), longing for the pre-ImClone Stewart, complained that "Silliness and self-mockery was never part of her old image. She was unwaveringly earnest on her old cooking show.... Now her perp walk pictures are just another part of the giddy montage of baby pictures, modeling poses and magazine covers that introduce her new talk show...." (para. 9).⁴

Burnett and Stewart used *Martha* to display Stewart's sense of humor and spontaneity to the viewing public. Implicit in this approach is the acknowledgement that Stewart's troubles stemmed in part from her public persona, particularly the fact that she

did not act according to prescribed gender and class roles; the show, thus, drops Stewart's judgmental perfectionism and works to make Stewart seem friendly and down-to-earth through the inclusion of celebrity guests, self-mocking television segments, and the inclusion of mistakes that taping live are likely to produce.⁵ Stewart's daytime television format was created to capitalize on Stewart's new underdog status and the strength she displayed through the ImClone scandal in the hopes of making her more publicly palatable.

NBC's *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart* debuted in prime-time on September 21, 2005. The show was a spin-off of Burnett's show with Donald Trump; the popular show provided viewers an opportunity to peak inside Trump's life of wealth and privilege and to revel in Trump's aggressive firing of the contestants competing to work for the Trump Organization. Unlike *Martha*, Stewart's version of *The Apprentice* was designed to showcase Stewart's business acumen and to feature MSLO's products, "which the company [hoped would] attract people to stores" (Gogoi, 2005, para. 7). Representing Stewart's success and wealth, however, meant representing Stewart as elite, an attribute that had been scorned through the ImClone scandal.

The premiere episode opened with a pre-recorded sequence in which Stewart speaks directly to viewers about the path her career in business has taken. As she speaks, the camera follows Stewart through her lavish 153-acre Bedford, New York, estate and through MSLO headquarters in the Starrett-Lehigh Building in Manhattan (which also housed the contestants for the series). Though Stewart's characterization of her business life included her downfall through the ImClone scandal, the rewards of Stewart's extraordinary success are fully displayed.

The 60-second opening sequence to *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart* looks like the opening sequences of Stewart's former programs with its displays of Stewart at home in Bedford, New York, and at work at MSLO. Its soundtrack, The Eurythmics' (1983), "Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)," emphasizes Stewart's wealth and privilege and also suggests the danger in being so successful: "Sweet dreams are made of this/Who am I to disagree?/Travel the world and the seven seas/Everybody's looking for something/Some of them want to use you/Some of them want to get used by you/Some of them want to abuse you/Some of them want to be abused." The combination of images and soundtrack represented the adversity Stewart had navigated and displayed her privilege as a sign that she had recouped her losses.

This prime-time Martha Stewart was more in line with Stewart's persona before *ImClone* and, as Alessandra Stanley (2005) notes, the promotional television spots for *Martha Stewart: The Apprentice* aimed to draw viewers interested in watching Stewart's potentially icy dismissal of one of the show's contestants each week: "NBC's teasers ... hinted that she would make heads roll and grown men cry" (para. 3). Building on this, Julie Hinds (2005) encouraged viewers to "Get ready for tough, judgmental Martha in prime time" (para. 4). However, unlike Donald Trump's often harsh dismissals, (and unlike Stewart's ruthless pre-prison persona), Stewart dismissed her contestants by telling them they do not "fit in," and she wrote a thank you note to each dismissed contestant. *Newsweek's* Keith Naughton (2006) found Stewart's behavior on *The Apprentice* to be "unaturally saccharine" (p. 46).

Despite some disappointment with the new Martha Stewart, the media pronounced Stewart's recovery plan a success. *The New York Time's* David Carr (2005)

suggested that “The speed and stakes of her comeback have few rivals” (para. 9). *Fortune* put a smugly smiling Stewart on their November 2005 cover with the phrase “I cannot be destroyed” in large bold font. The story inside argued that “it’s hard not to be amazed by her dramatic reversal of fortune (Sellers, 2005, p. 102). By November 2005, Stewart had an impressive list of accomplishments:

Her flagship magazine, Martha Stewart Living, has seen ad pages jump 48%; her new advice book, *The Martha Rules*, is on the New York Times bestseller list.... After plunging from a peak of \$295.6 million in 2001 to \$187.4 million [in 2004], revenues at her company, Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia (MSLO), are rebounding to an expected \$208 million [in 2005]; after the company’s seven consecutive quarters of losses, Wall Street projects a return to profitability in 2006 (Sellers, 2005, p. 102).

Her television programs, which displayed the new Martha in three dimensions, were less successful. The ratings for *Martha*, Stewart’s daytime program, were 20% below expectations and *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart* drew only six to seven million viewers, just about half of Trump’s audience in the previous season (Sellers, 2005, p. 120). Martha was renewed for a second season, but *The Apprentice: Martha Stewart* was not. Despite MSLO’s extraordinary rebound, the company reported a \$76 million loss in 2005 (Brady, 2006, para. 7). Stewart’s comeback faltered in part because her new softer persona did not meet audiences’ expectations. The Martha Stewart portrayed on *Martha* and *The Apprentice* was too nice for the audiences who had tuned in to see Stewart be “tough, judgmental Martha,” and once Stewart’s post-prison novelty wore off, she was just like any other host of a celebrity talk show.

Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia’s long-term plan for Martha Stewart is to make her “more like Betty Crocker, more ephemeral” (Brady, 2006, para. 5). To this end, MSLO announced a number of deals in 2006 and 2007 that would place less emphasis on

the human (and thus fallible) Martha Stewart: a new magazine, *Blueprint*, for women 25 to 45 in which Stewart has no presence; a new upscale line of goods at Macy's called The Martha Stewart Collection; a craft line at Michael's; a food line at Costco; and a ten-year contract with celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse. These strategies have helped make MSLO profitable again; in 2008, MSLO announced that it had earned a profit of \$7.7 million (Ives, 2008, para. 6).

In 2008, MSLO announced that *Martha* would be renewed for a fourth season, despite ratings below expectations. It is through an analysis of Stewart's new show that I would like to continue my work, particularly by re-interviewing the fans I spoke to before Stewart reported to Alderson Federal Prison to see how they interpret Stewart's new persona. *Martha*, out of all of MSLO's current media texts, best demonstrates the ways in which mainstream ideologies about gender, race, and class proscribed Stewart's behavior. Stewart's public persona had previously been at odds with her messages about the domestic sphere; after Alderson, Stewart toned down her perfectionist persona to win public favor. This helped her rebuild her empire, but it did not entirely redeem her; in fact, her new softer demeanor appears to have reduced public interest in her.

It is disappointing that the criticisms that Stewart faced before, during, and after ImClone did not motivate her to challenge the dominant ideologies from which the criticisms materialized. I believe my conversations with Stewart's fans suggest there is support for the aspects of Stewart's persona that challenge gender, racial, and class norms; shaping a new persona and creating new media messages that build upon these aspects of Stewart's previous persona could have proven strategic for strengthening MSLO, empowering Stewart's audience, and transforming US popular culture. As

Martha Stewart continues to rebuild her company and reconstruct her image, she will frequently have to struggle with mainstream ideologies that work to police the boundaries of what she can do and say, unless, she can find a way to construct a public persona that aims to change peoples' minds as much as it aims to change their homekeeping practices—that would truly be “a good thing.”

Notes

¹ For example, Stewart's accessories were regularly scrutinized during the trial. She was condemned for wearing a pearl necklace, a fur stoll, and carrying a Hermes "Birkin" bag (Barker, 2004). Of the handbag, which reportedly sells for up to \$80,000, *The New York Times*' Alex Kuczynski (2004) said: "the Birkin did little to promote the image of an approachable woman who has struggled up from humble roots. Instead, it cemented an image of her as a pampered fat cat seemingly willing to snatch money from Average Joe Stockholder" (para. 5).

² The fury over the poncho Stewart was wearing when she was released from prison suggests that many viewers watched Stewart emerge from her five months of confinement. Lion Brand Yarn, the yarn manufacturer whose yarn and pattern had been used for the hand-made poncho made for Stewart by a fellow inmate, reported that the pattern for Stewart's poncho had been downloaded "more than a million" times just after Stewart's release (Carter, 2005, para. 11). Over 13,000 hand-made copies of the poncho were later sold on MarthaStewart.com (Greppi, 2005, para. 13), and an invitation to attend Stewart's show placed on Lion Brand Yarn's website received "10,000 and 15,000 responses within an hour" (Orecklin, 2005, p. 8).

³ Part of Patrick's plan to help MSLO survive Stewart's involvement in the ImClone scandal involved diversification into new media offerings that did not revolve around Martha Stewart. In August 2004, MSLO purchased *Body & Soul* magazine and Dr. Andrew Weil's *Self-Healing* Newsletter. MSLO also prepared to premiere a new television program on PBS, *Everyday Food* (McNatt, 2004).

⁴ Cultural critics' reviews of *Martha* also suggest that the new Martha Stewart is an act. Much like the fans I interviewed, critics like Alessandra Stanley (2005) delight in finding traces of the old Martha Stewart in her new program: "What makes her shows hypnotic, however, is the occasional glimpse of the old Martha peeping through the insouciance – intense and instructional..." (para. 13). Joanna Weiss (2005) argues that "kibitzing, the lifeblood of daytime talk, is clearly not Stewart's thing. She barely strays from her trademark monotone, stumbles over names, treats guests like employees" (para. 4). Weiss also finds a trace of Stewart's former awkwardness around non-white guests; "On Tuesday's [September 20, 2005] show, as an aging, telegenic black woman – also named Martha Stewart – slowly demonstrated her recipe for red velvet cake, WASP Martha could barely restrain herself from throwing ingredients into the mixture" (para. 4).

⁵ The September 13, 2005 episode of *Martha* included a segment with comedian David Spade, who had recently parodied a post-prison Stewart on *Saturday Night Live*. The episode included the segment from *Saturday Night Live* and Stewart told Spade she had worn out her copy of it because she had been showing it to all of her dinner guests. David Spade appeared in a blond wig and Stewart's popular poncho. Stewart taught him to fold a t-shirt and to cook in the microwave with plastic utensils (just as she had at Alderson). Spade mocked Stewart's earnestness and she laughed right along with him.

APPENDIX A

BASIC STRUCTURE OF *MARTHA STEWART LIVING* MAGAZINE Based on the September 2000 issue

Below I use the September 2000 issue of *Martha Stewart Living* (the largest in my sample at 357 pages) to describe the order and features of the core components of the magazine. Though the October 2000 issue changed the presentation of the “Departments” listed below, and a few minor columns were moved, renamed, or replaced, the regular columns and features are representative of *Living*’s editorial contents prior to September 2004. Quotations are taken from MSLO-produced material describing *Living*’s editorial contents for advertisers.

Cover

Martha’s Calendar: One page. “What to do and when to do it for the home and garden.” Stewart’s calendar “serves as a day-to-day reminder of how to stay organized and fit more ‘living’ into every day.” The calendar lists dates for Stewart’s public appearances such as “lectures, book signings and television appearances.” The calendar first appeared in the August/September 1992 issue and was revamped in September 2003 to become “Gentle Reminders.”

A Letter from Martha: One page. A regular forum in which Stewart speaks directly to her readers about the features of the current issue and topics relevant to MSLO business. Stewart’s letter was present in first issue of *Living* and was removed in the September 2004 issue.

Contents: Two pages. The first page contains the features specific to that month. The second page lists regular features, discussed below as “Departments.”

Editor’s Letter: A regular forum in which the magazine’s editor writes directly to readers about the issue’s development and highlights. Stewart’s “A Letter from Martha” served this function when she was editor of *Living* (Winter 1990-May 1997). In February 1998 the “Editor’s Letter” was introduced to give newly appointed editor Stephen Drucker a forum in which to address readers.

Masthead: Two pages. The first page lists the editorial staff of the magazine. The second page lists staff in sales, marketing, print production and in MSLO corporate offices. Until *Living*’s October/November 1992 issue, the information, the masthead was incorporated into the same page as “A letter from Martha.” Beginning with the October/November 1992 issue, the masthead claimed its own page and included a column to introduce readers to key contributors in each issue. The descriptions of contributors ceased with the April 1995 issue. The masthead split into two pages in the September 1995 issue.

Do you Know: One page. Includes a collection of “little known” seasonal facts and figures about the month or season. Added in June 1998.

AskMartha: Four pages. “A very informative column that gives highly detailed answers to the questions asked by readers in their letters to Martha.” Introduced in March 1997.

Dessert of the Month: One page. A seasonal recipe for a dessert. Added in April 1998.

Find of the Month: One page. “A column that illustrates how widely available items both vintage and new can be utilized to make special projects.” Added in March 1999.

Arrangement of the Month: One page. A seasonal floral arrangement. Added in April 1998. Replaced with a similar column, “From the garden,” in October 1998.

Good Things: Six pages. “Decorating ideas and quick projects for the home, including recipes, inspired gifts to make, and creative ways to celebrate the season, holiday or everyday living.

Departments: Regular, though not necessarily monthly, columns including the eight core content areas of MSLO. The fifteen articles under department headings (and a brief description of the subjects discussed) in the September 2000 issue include: Tasting (“Bacon”), Cooking (“Broccoli rabe”), Decorating (“Bedskirts”), Project (“Combing”), Reading (“Decorating wisdom”), Renovating (“Hanging wallpaper”), Working (“Atelier”), Collecting (“450-mile yard sale”), Gardening (“Reviving houseplants”), Decorating (“Furnishing a fireplace”), Homekeeping (“Polish versus patina”), Project (“Housewarming gifts”), Decorating (“How much fabric do you need?”), Restoring (“A silk lampshade”), and Project (“Tea-dying”).

Program Guide: Six pages. Includes “highlights” from Stewart’s television programs, including, for example, steps and techniques in a process or a recipe. After the development of marthastewart.com in 1997, this regular column contained mostly recipes from Stewart’s television shows. Added as “Television program guide” in the February/March 1994 issue. Renamed “Program guide” in June 1998 and renamed “Television guide” once more in October 2002.

Features: Fifty-four pages. Includes articles on a variety of topics particular to the issue. These articles are grouped together without advertisements in the latter half of the issue. The articles featured in the September 2000 issue include: “All in the details” (the decoration schema in Stewart’s home in Maine), “Picture nails” (finding new uses for the hardware), “A Sunday lunch in the Blue Ridge Mountains,” “Blue” (using blue in the home), “A measured calm” (photographs from Alexis Stewart’s new loft).

What to Have for Dinner: Two pages. Includes recipes for an evening meal with four pull-out recipe cards. Added in Spring 1991; renamed “What’s for dinner?” in October 2002.

Fit to Eat: Three pages. Billed as being added in response to “reader requests,” this monthly column “provides recipes and ideas for flavorful meals with important nutrients ... without the fat.” Added in February/March 1994.

The Recipes: Six pages. A compilation of recipes from the issue’s articles. Present in first issue.

Ominmedia Guide: Three pages. A guide providing station information for Stewart’s television and radio programs, the web address for Stewart’s website, and a phone number for locating Stewart’s newspaper column. First appeared in the May 1998 issue.

The Guide: Six pages. A resource guide for readers. Includes source information for the materials used in the articles in the issue. Present in first issue.

Remembering: One page. A monthly column in which Stewart “takes a look back at important moments in her life and relates the lessons learned from them.” Replaced by “Behind the scenes” in June 2004.

APPENDIX B

BASIC STRUCTURE OF A *MARTHA STEWART LIVING* EPISODE

Based on the July 21, 2004 episode (Krzyzanowski, 2004g)

The segments that compose the episodes of Stewart's television programs, though not structured in a fixed order like the departments and features in *Living* magazine, are loosely based on the departments in *Living* magazine. Segments open with an image over which a title briefly appears to orient viewers to the contents of the segment about to begin. Lengthy special features and "Good Things" frequently appear on the show as well. The music that plays at different times during the show is classical and sounds like it was performed mostly with clarinets. The time for each segment in the episode is included at the end of the segments' descriptions.

Opening: The episode begins in the craft room on Stewart's studio set. Stewart tells viewers that "on these really cold days I think it's the perfect time to get organized, organized all around the house." She shares that over the weekend she cleaned and reorganized her bathroom cupboards. She describes that her current project in the craft room, building on the activities of her weekend, is to organize her craft supplies. To do this, she sorts ribbons, waxed thread, and push pins into plastic tubs, large lidded glass jars, and metal tins; each is marked with a computer-generated label stating its contents. After describing her strategies for organizing her craft room, Stewart introduces the topics to be covered in the episode to follow. She suggests that the suggestions and projects on this episode "tackle just about every room in the house" and are all components of the "organizing spree" she is on. Music swells at the end of her introduction and the scene transitions to a still image of a bedroom. Over the image the show's title, "Martha Stewart Living weekdays" appears. That image blends into the next scene where Stewart begins one of the projects she formerly introduced (1:35).

Organizing a Kitchen: The segment begins in the "mud room" of Studio A, where Stewart shows viewers how she and her staff have organized shoes, coats, gloves, and miscellaneous items in the space. She describes the set as "A perfect example of what my home in East Hampton looks like." Next, Stewart moves to the studio's kitchen and discusses the features of the studio's island, counters, sinks, and appliances, and demonstrates the techniques used to organize the contents of the drawers and cabinets. Stewart also gives viewers her rationale for the ways she stores utensils and collections. She stresses that the studio's kitchen is "the ideal kitchen" because of its large number of drawers. Though this segment's title suggests that strategies for organizing a kitchen will be its focus, the segment seems more like a tour of Stewart's studio (In fact, the online program guide for this episode describes this segment as a "Tour of Martha's Westport Studio"). Music swells as Stewart ends the segment. Before moving to a commercial break, a brief promotional spot encourages viewers to call a toll free phone number to subscribe to *Martha Stewart Living* (7:30).

Commercial break

Chard Ravioli: This segment begins in the studio's kitchen where Stewart stands behind the kitchen island and introduces the recipe she will demonstrate. She notes that viewers may be disinterested in a recipe featuring Swiss chard, but she insists it is a delicious recipe. Stewart begins by making the ravioli's filling by sautéing chard and shallots; while she cools the mixture, Stewart makes broth for the final dish by boiling the chard stems in chicken broth. Once cooled, Stewart adds ricotta and parmesan to the chard mixture. Next she demonstrates how to use wonton wrappers to make ravioli with the chard mixture. She boils the "ravioli" and then places them in individual bowls that had been previously filled with broth. Music swells as Stewart tastes the finished product; she describes it as "a healthy and elegant dish," and the segment fades to a commercial break (6:25).

Commercial break

Photo flipper: This segment begins with Stewart sitting at a work table by a glowing fireplace. Stewart shares with viewers that it is fun to make plans for an "elaborate photo album" to commemorate a special event or trip, but she recognizes the photos often sit in disorganized piles until those plans materialize. She offers the "photo flipper" as an "intermediate solution," to hold photos until they can be properly placed in a photo album. A photo flipper is an inexpensive plastic book that consists of clear sleeves that hold 3 x 5 inch or 4 x 6 inch photos. Stewart demonstrates how to personalize the cover and label the date and location at which the photos were taken. Stewart ends the segment by calling a photo flipper "a good thing," signaling that it, like the "Good Things" in her magazine is a quick, inexpensive, and simple idea. Music swells and this segment transitions into the next (2:20).

Organizing kids' art: In this segment, Stewart stands behind a work table in a craft room. Displayed on the table are several storage boxes. Stewart discusses the qualities of each box and demonstrates how children's art work has been preserved inside. She praises items that are "archival quality" and "acid free," and gives the price for each storage option. Stewart shows viewers a photo album made by one of MSLO's employees to record her son's three dimensional art products. Finally, Stewart demonstrates how viewers can use Plexiglas and metal clips to "frame" a piece of artwork. She advises viewers to "mark the collections clearly," and to mark the date of creation on each piece of artwork. Stewart ends the segment by suggesting that careful storage of a child's artwork will make it last until one's child is grown and begins to save the artwork made by their own child. Music swells and the segment fades to a commercial break. (4:50).

Commercial break

Underbed drawer: In this segment, Stewart is joined by *Martha Stewart Living* television associate style editor Tom Tamborello. Stewart introduces the segment's topic by discussing the utility of an underbed drawer; she suggests that using an underbed drawer is an easy and convenient solution for people who feel they never have enough storage space. Stewart mentions that such a box is available for \$25 from Ikea, but

stresses that Ikea's box is "not terribly attractive." Stewart and Tamborello work together in the segment to make Ikea's box more attractive and functional. They do so by using grass-cloth wall covering to cover the outside of the box. In the segment viewers watch them properly measure the wall covering sheets needed to cover the box. They apply the wall covering with wallpaper paste. Stewart and Tamborello finish the corners of the box with strips of leather. Music swells as they affix the remaining pieces of leather, and Stewart tells viewers that after the commercial break they will make "perfect top" for the drawer (7:40).

Commercial break

Underbed box (continued): Stewart welcomes viewers back from the commercial break by emphasizing that for proper underbed storage, a cover is essential. To make a cover for the bed, Tamborello and Stewart use artist's canvas, and snaps made for use with boats. With a snap at each of the drawer's four corners, the canvas is stretched taut across the drawer's top. Before the top is affixed, Stewart puts a sheet of cedar on the bottom of the drawer. Stewart praises the finished product for being dust proof and for being "accessible when you need it, invisible when you don't;" she suggests that viewers should make one drawer for each bed in their house. Stewart thanks Tamborello for helping her demonstrate the project, and as music swells, the segment transitions to commercial break with an image of the newly constructed underbed box in place under a bed (3:45).

Commercial break

Seed organizer: This segment begins in a greenhouse where Stewart shares with viewers her techniques for storing left-over seed packets that she has accumulated "from year to year." She stresses that storing seeds properly involves providing them with a cool and dark place. Stewart shows viewers her storage system, which consists of narrow wooden file boxes and cardboard dividers to label and organize her seed collection. She stresses that her system organizes seeds "neatly and usefully." As an alternative, Stewart suggests storing seeds in a glass jar. She stresses that viewers can easily make their own desiccants to keep the seeds dry, using cheesecloth and dry milk or untreated cat litter. The segment ends abruptly when Stewart says if viewers organize their seeds, "you'll be a better gardener and make the most out of that packet of seeds." (2:25).

Commercial break

Organizing a dresser: This segment opens with music and an image of a dresser drawer and its contents neatly arranged atop a bed. Stewart introduces the next project to viewers by saying, "In the midst of an organizing scheme, I try to go all out." Stewart's first demonstration involves how to make a velvet-covered pad to line the bottom of an accessories drawer. Once the newly-constructed pad is placed in a dresser drawer, Stewart shows viewers how she arranges her jewelry collection with aluminum boxes. A second velvet-lined drawer contains more accessories. Stewart stresses that proper organization will help one get dressed faster. For her sweater drawers, Stewart lays down

strips of cedar, stressing that this will help keep moths away. Finally, Stewart turns to the drawer shown in the opening image of the segment and demonstrates how she uses organizer boxes in dresser drawers to properly store items. Each of the boxes is lined with acid-free tissue paper; in two of them, Stewart organizes her socks by color. Stockings and “undergarments” are organized in two additional boxes. Stewart demonstrates how she folds some of her garments in acid-free tissue to keep them “wrinkle free.” She ends the segment by stressing that proper storage will make it “easier to find things” and will give clothes a longer life. Music swells and the scene transitions into the next segment (4:25).

Tip of the day: Music plays softly during this brief segment in which Stewart demonstrates how to use a beeswax candle on the bottom of a “temperamental drawer” to help it open and close more smoothly. Stewart reasons that using a beeswax candle on a drawer is like waxing skis; in both situations, the wax facilitates movement. The segment quickly ends and fades directly into the closing credits for the program (0:28).

Closing credits: The production credits for the program roll over a number of garden scenes, an image of a home, and a smiling Stewart swinging on a tree swing while music plays (0:20).

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographic characteristics of the participants are as follows:

Sex: Female: 35
Male: 3

Race: White: 32
African-American: 1
Asian: 2
South Asian: 1
Multiracial: 2

Age: Twenties: 9
Thirties: 9
Forties: 11
Fifties: 5
Sixties: 3
Over Seventy: 1

Political Affiliation: Democrat: 16
Republican: 4
Independent: 15
Green: 1
Undecided: 1

Sexual Identity: Heterosexual: 25
Gay: 3
Lesbian: 6
Bisexual: 3
Celibate: 1

Relationship Status: Single: 8
Partnered: 13
Married: 14
Divorced: 1
Widowed: 2

Children: None: 22
One: 5
Two: 6
Three: 2
Four: 2
Seven: 1

Education: High School Diploma: 4
 College Degree: 21
 Graduate or Professional Degree: 13

Yearly Household Income: Less than \$20,000: 1
 \$20,000-50,000: 8
 \$50,000-75,000: 10
 \$75,000-100,000: 9
 Over \$100,000: 7

Fan of Martha Stewart: Yes: 25
 Conflicted: 7
 No: 6

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTIONS

Pilot Study

April 1999

Amherst, Massachusetts

Barbara: A white, widowed heterosexual woman in her sixties. She had no children. She considers herself Republican. She is a college graduate, and a retired teacher who reported that her household's yearly income is over \$100,000. She "absolutely" considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with "anyone who will listen." She subscribes to *Martha Stewart Living* and watches *Martha Stewart Living* on television often; she does not own any Martha Stewart merchandise. She has not visited MarthaStewart.com.

Mary: A white, married heterosexual woman in her forties. She has two children. She considers herself an Independent. She is a college graduate, and a Registered Nurse who reported that her household's yearly income is \$75,000-100,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her sisters, her father and her friends. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living, but she watches almost every episode of Martha Stewart Living on television (she records the program when she cannot watch it); she owns four Martha Stewart Living books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She has not visited MarthaStewart.com.

Dianne: A white, engaged heterosexual woman in her twenties. She had no children. She considers herself politically undecided. She is a college graduate, and a graduate student who reported that her household's yearly income is \$20,000-50,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her friends and co-workers. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and rarely watches Martha Stewart Living on television, but she does watch Martha Stewart on CBS This Morning. She does not own any Martha Stewart merchandise. She has not visited MarthaStewart.com.

Emily: A white, single lesbian woman in her thirties. She has no children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a graduate degree and works as a Research technician; she reported that her household's yearly income is \$20,000-50,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her friends and her mother; she also reported that she writes email parodies of Martha Stewart that she sends to friends and family. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living, but she watches Martha Stewart Living on television from time to time. She has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She has not visited MarthaStewart.com.

Concord, Massachusetts
October 2002

Candace: A white, married heterosexual woman in her forties. She has one child. She considers herself a Republican. She is a college graduate, currently unemployed, and reported that her household's yearly income is \$20,000-50,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her sister and mother-in-law. She does not currently subscribe to Martha Stewart Living (though she has in the past) and often watches Martha Stewart Living and From Martha's Kitchen. She has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She visits MarthaStewart.com from time to time.

Beatrice: A white, married heterosexual woman over seventy. She has four children. She did not report her political affiliation. She has a graduate degree and works as a Psychometrist and Education Consultant; she did not report her household's yearly income. She "doesn't know" if she's a Martha Stewart fan and did not report if she discussed her interest in Martha Stewart with anyone. She subscribes to Martha Stewart Living and watches Martha Stewart Living on television from time to time. She has purchased items from Martha by Mail and the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She has not visited MarthaStewart.com.

Catherine: A white, married heterosexual woman in her forties. She has four children. She considers herself an Independent. She is a college graduate and works as a stay-at-home mom who reported that her household's yearly income is over \$100,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her sister. She does not currently subscribe to Martha Stewart Living (though she has in the past) and watches Martha Stewart Living on television from time to time. She owns "quite a few" of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from Martha by Mail. She rarely visits MarthaStewart.com.

Olivia: A white, married, heterosexual woman in her thirties. She has three children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a graduate degree and works as a stay-at-home mom who reported that her household's yearly income is \$75,000-100,000. She says she is "not really" a Martha Stewart fan and sometimes jokes about Martha Stewart's "perfectionism" with family and friends. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and rarely watches Martha Stewart Living on television. She has purchased items from Martha by Mail and the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She has not visited MarthaStewart.com.

Candace: A white, widowed, heterosexual woman in her sixties. She has two children. She considers herself a Republican. She is a college graduate with some graduate education who works as a receptionist at an auction house; she did not report her household's yearly income. She says she is a "quasi" Martha Stewart fan and discusses Martha Stewart's "over the topness" with her friends. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and watches Martha Stewart Living from time to time. She owns two of Martha Stewart's books. She has not visited MarthaStewart.com. [Delores's sister]

Delores: A white, married, heterosexual woman in her fifties. She has three children. She considers herself an Independent. She has a graduate degree and works as a research assistant; she reported that her household's yearly income is \$75,000-100,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her sister, friends and students. She subscribes to Martha Stewart Living, watches Martha Stewart Living on television often and watches almost every episode of From Martha's Kitchen. She owns three of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from Martha by Mail and the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She often visits MarthaStewart.com.

Online

November 2002

All participants responded to a posting on the bulletin boards on MarthaStewart.com

Renee: A white, heterosexual woman in her thirties who is currently living with her boyfriend (she says they are planning to marry soon). She has no children. She considers herself an Independent. She has a college degree and works as an occupational therapy assistant and a massage therapist; she reported that her household's yearly income is \$50,000-75,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest with her sister. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living, but reads Martha Stewart Living and Martha Stewart Weddings from time to time. She often watches Martha Stewart Living and From Martha's Garden on television. She watches From Martha's Kitchen from time to time. She has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart and from the Web. She visits MarthaStewart.com almost every day.

Pamela: A white, married heterosexual woman in her thirties. She has two children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a college degree and works as an Incentive Travel Program Manager; she reported that her household's yearly income is over \$100,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her friends and family. She subscribes to Martha Stewart Living, often reads Martha Stewart Baby, and watches Martha Stewart Living and From Martha's Garden on television from time to time. She owns "ten to fifteen" of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She visits MarthaStewart.com almost every day.

Grace: A white, married heterosexual woman in her twenties. She has two children. She considers herself an Independent. She has a college degree and works as a stay-at-home mother; she reported that her household's yearly income is \$75,000-100,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and she does not discuss her interest in Martha Stewart with anyone; she reported that if Martha Stewart comes up in conversation it is "to be silly." She subscribes to Martha Stewart Living, reads almost every issue of Martha Stewart Baby, and rarely watches Martha Stewart Living on television (she once recorded an episode featuring Elmo to "introduce cooking to my toddler"). She owns four of Martha Stewart's books and one of Martha Stewart's CDs.

She has purchased items from Martha by Mail and the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She visits MarthaStewart.com almost every day.

Dara: A white, engaged, heterosexual woman in her twenties. She has no children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a college degree and works as an Editor; she reported that her household's yearly income is \$20,000-50,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her family and friends. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living, but reads almost every issue of Martha Stewart Weddings. She watches Martha Stewart Living on television from time to time. She owns one of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from Martha by Mail and the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She visits MarthaStewart.com almost every day.

Isabel: A white, married, heterosexual woman in her twenties. She has no children. She considers herself a Republican. She has a college degree and works in Human Resources; she reported that her household's yearly income is \$75,000-100,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her husband, co-workers and friends. She subscribes to Martha Stewart Living, reads Martha Stewart Weddings often, and watches Martha Stewart Living and From Martha's Garden on television from time to time. She has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She visits MarthaStewart.com almost every day.

Amherst, Massachusetts

January 2003

Janice: A white, married, heterosexual woman in her sixties. She has two children. She considers herself Independent. She has a high school diploma and worked as a Real Estate Broker and owned a Masonry Supply business; she did not report her household's yearly income but instead suggested she had a "good net worth." She says she is and isn't a Martha Stewart fan and explained that she believes Martha Stewart is very creative yet feels some of her creations are "over the top." She sometimes discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with other women. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and watches Martha Stewart Living and From Martha's Garden on television from time to time. She owns two Martha Stewart books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She has never visited MarthaStewart.com.

Carole: A Euro-Jewish, married, heterosexual woman in her fifties. She has seven children. She considers herself an Independent. She has a college degree and works as an English as a Second Language teacher and is a graduate student; she reported that her household's yearly income is \$50,000-75,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her four daughters. She subscribes to Martha Stewart Living, often reads Martha Stewart Baby, and never watches any of Martha Stewart's television programs. She owns two of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from Martha by Mail and from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She visits MarthaStewart.com from time to time.

Maggie: A white, divorced, heterosexual woman in her forties. She has two children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a graduate degree and works as a newspaper reporter; she reported that her yearly household income is \$20,000-50,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her sister and co-workers. She subscribes to Martha Stewart Living and never watches any of Martha Stewart's television programs. She owns one of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She rarely visits MarthaStewart.com.

MIT/Boston, Massachusetts

May 2003

Max: A white, partnered, gay man in his forties. He has no children. He considers himself an Independent. He has a college degree and works as the Regional Director of a Massachusetts state department; he reported that his yearly household income is over \$100,000. He considers himself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses his interest in Martha Stewart with his sister and sister-in-law. He does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living, but reads it from time to time; he often watches Martha Stewart Living and From Martha's Garden on television and watches From Martha's Kitchen from time to time. He has seen almost every episode of Martha Stewart's holiday television specials. He does not own any of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. He visits MarthaStewart.com from time to time. [Michael's partner]

Michael: A white, partnered, gay man in his thirties. He has no children. He considers himself a Democrat. He has a graduate degree and works as a Communication Consultant; he reported that his yearly household income is over \$100,000. He considers himself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses his interest in Martha Stewart with his sister and his partner. He does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living, but reads it from time to time; he watches Martha Stewart Living, Martha Stewart's holiday specials and Martha Stewart on CBS This Morning from time to time and rarely watches From Martha's Kitchen and From Martha's Garden. He owns two of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. He visits MarthaStewart.com from time to time. [Max's partner].

Aaron: A white, single, gay man in his thirties. He has no children. He considers himself a Democrat. He has a professional degree and works as a Nurse Anesthetist; he reported that his yearly household income is over \$100,000. He considers himself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses his interest in Martha Stewart with his friends and family. He does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living but reads it from time to time. He often watches Martha Stewart Living and From Martha's Kitchen on television and watches From Martha's Garden and Martha Stewart's holiday specials from time to time. He does not own any of Martha Stewart's books and has bought items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. He rarely visits MarthaStewart.com.

Belmont Hill, Massachusetts

June 2003

Lane: A white, partnered lesbian woman in her fifties. She has no children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a graduate degree and works as a Clergywoman and Educator; she reported that her yearly household income is \$50,000-75,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her partner, gay male friends and her sister. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living but reads it from time to time. She watches Martha Stewart Living on television often and listens to Ask Martha on the radio from time to time. She does not own any of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She rarely visits MarthaStewart.com.

Hannah: A white, married lesbian woman in her thirties. She has no children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a graduate degree and works as a Music Therapist; she reported that her yearly household income is \$50,000-75,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her wife, friends and co-workers. She subscribes to Martha Stewart Living and reads Martha Stewart Weddings often. She watches Martha Stewart Living on television from time to time. She does not own any of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She visits MarthaStewart.com from time to time. [Married to Hailey]

Hailey: A white, married lesbian woman in her twenties. She has no children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a graduate degree and works as a Crisis Counselor at a center for LGBTQ youth; she reported that her yearly household income is \$50,000-75,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her partner, mother and friends. She subscribes to Martha Stewart Living and reads Martha Stewart Weddings from time to time. She watches Martha Stewart Living on television from time to time. She does not own any of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She rarely visits MarthaStewart.com. [Married to Hannah]

Sarah: A white, single lesbian woman in her forties. She has no children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a college degree and works as an Editor; she reported that her yearly household income is \$50,000-75,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her friends. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and watches Martha Stewart Living on television from time to time. She does not own any of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She visits MarthaStewart.com from time to time.

Karla: A white, partnered lesbian woman in her fifties. She has one child. She considers herself an Independent. She has a graduate degree and works as a Multicultural Training Consultant; she reported that her yearly household income is over \$100,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her partner and friends. She subscribes to Martha Stewart Living and reads almost every issue of Martha Stewart Kids. She watches almost every episode of Martha Stewart

Living on television and has recorded episodes when she cannot watch them. She has seen almost every one of Martha Stewart's holiday television specials and watches From Martha's Garden from time to time. She owns "ten or so" of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from Martha by Mail, from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart and on eBay. She visits MarthaStewart.com often.

Suffolk University—Boston, Massachusetts

March 2004

Jackie: An African-American, partnered heterosexual woman in her fifties. She has no children. She considers herself an Independent. She has a college degree and works as a Documentary Film Producer; she reported that her yearly household income is \$75,000-100,000. She does not consider herself a Martha Stewart fan and does not discuss Martha Stewart. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and rarely watches Martha Stewart Living on television. She does not own any of Martha Stewart's books and does not own any Martha Stewart merchandise. She has never visited MarthaStewart.com.

Rachel: An Asian, partnered, heterosexual woman in her twenties. She has no children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a college degree and works as a Human Resources Manager; she reported that her yearly household income is \$50,000-75,000. She says she is "not really" a Martha Stewart fan and discusses Martha Stewart with her mother. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living but reads the magazine from time to time. She watches Martha Stewart Living, From Martha's Kitchen and Martha Stewart's holiday specials on television from time to time. She does not own any of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She has never visited MarthaStewart.com.

Suffolk University—Boston, Massachusetts

April 2004

Kira: A Multiracial single, celibate woman in her forties. She has no children. She considers herself an Independent. She has a graduate degree and works as a Theatre Professional; she reported that her yearly household income is less than \$20,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her female friends. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and often watches Martha Stewart Living often and From Martha's Garden from time to time. She owns one of Martha Stewart's books and does not own any additional Martha Stewart merchandise. She has never visited MarthaStewart.com.

Maribel: A Multiracial married heterosexual woman in her thirties. She has no children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a graduate degree and works as an Educator; she reported that her yearly household income is \$75,000-100,000. She does not consider herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses with her friends "how stupid Martha looks next to the rest of the world!" She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and watches Martha Stewart Living on television from time to time. She does not own any of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She has never visited MarthaStewart.com.

Nadia: A South Asian single bisexual woman in her twenties. She has no children. She considers herself an Independent. She has a college degree and was temporarily unemployed at the time of the interview; she reported that her yearly household income is \$20,000-50,000. She considers herself a Martha Stewart fan “to a certain extent” and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her friends and family. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and watches Martha Stewart Living, Martha Stewart’s holiday specials, From Martha’s Kitchen, and From Martha’s Garden from time to time. She does not own any of Martha Stewart’s books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She rarely visits MarthaStewart.com.

Wynne: An Asian, partnered heterosexual woman in her twenties. She has no children. She considers herself to be an Independent. She has a college degree and is working on a graduate degree; she reported that her yearly household income is \$75,000-100,000. She is undecided about whether she is a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her boyfriend. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and watches Martha Stewart Living, From Martha’s Kitchen, and From Martha’s Garden from time to time. She does not own any of Martha Stewart’s books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She visits MarthaStewart.com from time to time.

Northampton, Massachusetts
July 2004

Bethany: A white, single bisexual woman in her twenties. She has no children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a high school degree, has taken some college courses and works as a body piercer; she reported that her yearly household income is \$50,000-75,000. She does not consider herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and did not report whether she discussed Martha Stewart with anyone. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and never watches any of Martha Stewart’s television programs. She does not own any Martha Stewart merchandise. She has never visited MarthaStewart.com.

Lauren: A white, partnered heterosexual woman in her thirties. She has one child. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a college degree and works as a Manager/Owner of an Auction Gallery; she reported that her yearly household income is \$20,000-50,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her partner, friends and close family. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and reads the magazine from time to time. She watches Martha Stewart Living, From Martha’s Garden and From Martha’s Kitchen from time to time. She owns one of Martha Stewart’s books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She listens to Ask Martha on the radio from time to time. She rarely visits MarthaStewart.com.

Abby: A white, partnered bisexual woman in her forties. She has one child. She considers herself a Green Party member. She has a college degree and works as a Union Servicing Representative; she reported that her yearly household income is \$50,000-75,000. She does not consider herself a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her friends and family. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and rarely watches Martha Stewart Living, From Martha's Kitchen and From Martha's Garden on television. She does not own any Martha Stewart merchandise. She has never visited MarthaStewart.com.

Fiona: A white, single heterosexual woman in her forties. She has no children. She considers herself a Democrat. She has a high school degree and works as a General Manager of a Motorcycle Dealership; she reported that her yearly household income is \$50,000-75,000. She considers herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses her interest in Martha Stewart with her mother, sisters and friends. She does not currently subscribe to Martha Stewart Living, though she has in the past; she reads the magazine from time to time. She watches Martha Stewart Living and From Martha's Garden from time to time and has recorded episodes when she couldn't watch them. She does not own any of Martha Stewart's books and has purchased items from the Martha Stewart Everyday line at Kmart. She has never visited MarthaStewart.com.

Elaine: A white, partnered heterosexual woman in her forties. She has one child. She considers herself an Independent. She has a college degree and was unemployed at the time of the interview; she reported that her yearly household income is \$75,000-100,000. She does not consider herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and has discussed Martha Stewart's legal troubles with her family and friends. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and rarely watches Martha Stewart Living and From Martha's Kitchen on television. She does not own any Martha Stewart merchandise. She has never visited MarthaStewart.com.

Jenny: A white, single heterosexual woman in her forties. She has no children. She considers herself an Independent. She has a high school degree and has taken some college or trade classes; she works as a Chef. She reported that her yearly household income is \$20,000-50,000. She does not consider herself to be a Martha Stewart fan and discusses Martha Stewart's legal troubles with friends and customers. She does not subscribe to Martha Stewart Living and rarely watches From Martha's Kitchen and From Martha's Garden on television. She does not own any Martha Stewart merchandise. She has never visited MarthaStewart.com.

APPENDIX E

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONNAIRE

The following is a brief *anonymous* survey to help me accurately report on the individuals who participated in this discussion. Thanks for your help!

1. Do you consider yourself to be a Martha Stewart fan? _____ Please explain.

2. How often do you read “Martha Stewart Living” (magazine)?

Never	Rarely	From time to time	Often	Almost every issue
-------	--------	----------------------	-------	-----------------------

3. How often do you read “Martha Stewart Weddings” (magazine)?

Never	Rarely	From time to time	Often	Almost every issue
-------	--------	----------------------	-------	-----------------------

4. How often do you read “Martha Stewart Baby” (magazine)?

Never	Rarely	From time to time	Often	Almost every issue
-------	--------	----------------------	-------	-----------------------

5. Do you currently subscribe to “Martha Stewart Living?” _____
Have you ever subscribed? _____

6. How often do you watch the “Martha Stewart Living” television show?

Never	Rarely	From time to time	Often	Almost every episode
-------	--------	----------------------	-------	-------------------------

7. Have you ever recorded Martha Stewart’s show when you could not watch it? _____
If so, how often? _____

8. How often have you watched Martha Stewart’s holiday specials?

Never	Rarely	From time to time	Often	Almost every special
-------	--------	----------------------	-------	-------------------------

9. How often do you watch Martha Stewart's Tuesday segments on "CBS This Morning"?

Never	Rarely	From time to time	Often	Almost every episode
-------	--------	----------------------	-------	-------------------------

10. How often do you watch "Martha's Kitchen" on the Food Network?

Never	Rarely	From time to time	Often	Almost every episode
-------	--------	----------------------	-------	-------------------------

11. How often do you watch "From Martha's Garden" on Home & Garden Television?

Never	Rarely	From time to time	Often	Almost every episode
-------	--------	----------------------	-------	-------------------------

12. How often do you visit Martha Stewart Living's website?

Never	Rarely	From time to time	Often	Almost every day
-------	--------	----------------------	-------	---------------------

13. Do you listen to Martha Stewart's radio program "Ask Martha?"

Never	Rarely	From time to time	Often	Almost every day
-------	--------	----------------------	-------	---------------------

14. Have you read any of Martha Stewart's books? _____
If so, how many? _____

15. Do you own any of Martha Stewart's books? _____
If so, how many? _____

16. Have you ever purchased a Martha Stewart compact disc? _____
If so, how many? _____

17. Have you ever purchased a Martha Stewart licensed product?

From Martha by Mail? _____

From K-Mart? _____

Elsewhere? _____

18. Have you ever come across Martha Stewart in other places not listed above (television, magazines, books, stores, etc.)? _____
If so, can you recall where? _____

19. Do any of your household members read or watch Martha Stewart? _____
If so, who? _____

20. Do you talk about Martha Stewart with family or friends? _____
If so, with whom? _____
What do you talk about? _____

21. In a few sentences, please explain what aspects of Martha Stewart's messages you find most useful.

What is your favorite part of her magazine and/or television show?

Have you ever used her suggestions? _____

How would you describe yourself? Circle the best answer where appropriate.

22. Gender: _____

23. Race/ethnicity: _____

24. Party affiliation: Democrat Republican Independent Undecided

25. Where would you put yourself on this scale?

1 ----- 2 ----- 3 ----- 4 ----- 5
liberal conservative

26. Religious affiliation: _____

27. Relationship status: _____

28. Sexual orientation: _____

29. Into which category would you place your household's yearly income?

Less than \$20,000
\$20,000-50,000
\$50,000-75,000
\$75,000-100,000
over \$100,000

30. What is the highest level of schooling you have completed?

some high school or less
high school
some college or trade school
college or trade school
graduate or professional school

31. What is your occupation?

32. What do you feel are the three most pressing issues facing society today?

- a. _____
b. _____
c. _____

33. Do you consider yourself to be in favor of women's rights? _____

Do you consider yourself to be a feminist? _____

34. Into what age group do you fall?

18 or younger
19-29
30-39
40-49
50-59
60-69
70 or older

35. Do you have children? _____

If so, how many, and what are their ages? _____

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The Clips and Martha on TV:

What was your favorite part of the clips you just saw?

What was missing from what you saw?

Which of the projects you just saw would you attempt? Are there any you're sure you wouldn't attempt?

How would you describe Martha Stewart's projects?	Difficulty level
	Time
	Expense

How does Martha Stewart relate to guests on her show?

What aspects of Martha Stewart's messages do you not like or find unhelpful?

Why do you watch or read Martha Stewart Living?

Do you share things you learn on her shows or in her magazines with people in your life? With whom? How do they react to what you say?

How can people admire a completed Martha Stewart project yet make fun of Martha Stewart?

Martha Stewart as a Person:

Describe Martha Stewart's personality and attitude.

How does Martha Stewart present herself? Does she reflect in her appearance what she teaches on her show? Describe the way she looks.

Does Martha Stewart have a sense of humor?

Do you think she's feminine? Why or why not?

Could she have made it this far with any other personality/persona?

Can you imagine Martha Stewart with a different voice, accent, skin color, etc? Would she be as successful?

What do you know about Martha Stewart's personal relationships?

Would you be friends with Martha Stewart?

Would you call Martha Stewart a yankee?

What do you know about Martha Stewart? Rumors, jokes?

What do you think people like most about Martha Stewart? Dislike most?

What do you think is Martha Stewart's purpose? What is she trying to do? Why do you think she does what she does? Is she successful?

What do you think of Martha Stewart the business person? What's her philosophy?

What do you think about Martha Stewart's recent trouble?

What's the secret behind Martha Stewart's success?

What do you think Martha Stewart has to learn?

Martha Stewart the Phenomenon:

What is Martha Stewart teaching?

Who is the average Martha Stewart viewer?

Age
Class
Race
Marital status
Number of Children
Education

Who are the projects Martha Stewart suggests supposed to benefit? Who are they for?

Do you think Martha Stewart's suggestions/projects are only for women?

Why Martha Stewart? What is special about her that has made her so famous?

Do you watch/read other home and lifestyle personalities? How do they compare to Martha?

How do you reconcile Stewart's expensive taste with her "affordable" line at Kmart? Why Kmart? Do you think her viewers are Kmart shoppers? Do you think Martha Stewart uses her Kmart line in her own home(s)?

Would you wear something with Martha Stewart's name on it? Use a tool with her name on it? Would her label keep you from buying something you liked?

Why might people be hesitant to admit liking Martha Stewart?

Do you have any hesitation in saying you like Martha Stewart? Do you think there's a certain aspect of shame in being a Martha Stewart fan?

Why do people love to hate Martha Stewart?

Have you ever heard any jokes about Martha Stewart?

What do you think about the Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia business strategy to phase Martha Stewart out and replace her with current staff members?

APPENDIX G

TELEVISION SEGMENTS FROM *MARTHA STEWART LIVING* SCREENED IN INTERVIEWS

The Pilot Study Segments:

Segment One (three minutes) is entitled “Fakes and Originals,” and consists of Stewart and guest Albert Sach, “a renowned American antiques dealer” who Stewart says possesses a “keen appreciation for early American furniture and eye for quality [which] make him the perfect scholar to teach us how to identify authenticity—whether it is real or fake.” Sach states that fakes are made to fool and suggests that they look at a couple of pieces to determine which is which.

They examine two card tables, one is an original from Rhode Island in 1790 and the other is a fake, circa 1920. Sach admits that sometimes it is hard to tell from afar and tips the tables over to compare the structures and look for natural oxidation. He tells the two apart by the stain on the fake, it is not the natural color of the wood. Also, Stewart and Sach discuss the way the wood is pieced together, the original possesses “integral construction.”

Sach notes that a fake cannot pass the color test. Stewart asks the prices of the tables: the original is worth \$15,000, the fake only \$1,500. This marks the end of the segment. Before moving to a commercial break, Stewart says they will be back to look at more fakes and originals.

Segment Two (six minutes) entitled “Sweet peas,” begins with a voice-over in which Stewart introduces “Wiltshire Ripple” a sweet pea variety she purchased in England. This information is combined with visuals of the flower. Next, Stewart introduces Susan Keating of Surry, Maine who owns the “Sweet Pea Gardens & Greenhouse.” Keating is known as the “sweet pea lady” and is one of the few American members of the Sweet Pea Society in England

The segment combines Keating’s suggestions with images of her working on her farm. She talks about the fragile nature of the plants and stresses the importance of trellising. Her husband built the trellises for her eighteen rows of plants with 2 x 4s and chicken wire. Through a voice-over, Stewart gives instructions for planting sweet peas in pots. Keating demonstrates how to use string to keep the plants from flopping over in rain and wind, stressing she wants the flowers to grow upwards, not crooked. With a voice-over, Stewart explains that Keating is an organic gardener who fertilizes her flowers with a manure tea made from dehydrated manure and with fish emulsion concentrate, which is high in nitrogen. Stewart offers that Keating gardens organically to keep the area chemical free for her daughter Maggie, in whose honor Keating planted “Maggie May.”

Keating then emphasizes the necessity of cutting flowers aggressively to keep the plants from going to seed and to produce continual blooms. She cuts her flowers and because they are highly perishable, she puts them directly into a lemon-lime soda and water mixture. She states that flowers need both sugar and acid and that her mixture keeps flowers blooming longer in their vases.

As the segment draws to a close, Stewart describes a number of varieties of sweet peas: “Cupani” which was sent from a Siscillian monk to a friend in England in 1699; “Captain of the Blues” developed by Henry Eckford, father of the sweet pea; and “America” a red and white striated sweet pea. Additionally, Stewart mentions “Spencer Supreme,” “Lilac Ripple” and “Millie Viner’s Charm.” Keating talks about “Nimbus” a silver sweet pea she is trying for the first time. She says she tries new varieties every year and keeps some and drops others—she believes Nimbus is a keeper. Stewart ends the segment with the statement, “Now is the perfect time to plant your sweet peas and when you see the first blossoms on the vine, you’ll understand why this flower is so intoxicating.”

Segment Three (ten minutes) comes from the “askMartha” segment of the show in which Stewart takes calls from viewers. This segment is focused upon bed linens. The first caller is Julie Gootee from Nashville Indiana who wants to know how to fold a fitted sheet. Stewart remarks that this is a common problem, that many people have the same dilemma, and that some feel it is an insurmountable problem. She laughs that her mother puts her fitted sheets immediately back on the bed to avoid having to fold them. Stewart notes that it takes practice and that she has been practicing because she doesn’t have fitted sheets—her beds are odd sizes and fitted sheets are not made that fit her beds. She then demonstrates and Julie follows along, laughing occasionally at the difficulty of the task. Stewart asks, “Having fun?” and laughs too. When she is finished, Stewart puts the sheet on a pressing pad made of teflon fabric on a table to steam out the creases in the sheet. She notes how beautiful it looks and continues to fold it. She remarks, “It makes me so happy when I can get it folded correctly so that it can go into the linen closet and not look like just a big blob.”

She admires that it is now a perfect rectangle and as she touches it up with the iron, she tells Julie that it is now a sheet that she can put on her bed and feel good about. Julie replies that she is thankful because her mother taught her once, but she never got it. Stewart says the folding technique will be “live action” on her website, and she moves on to the next caller.

The next caller is Donna Coppola from Basking Ridge, New Jersey who wants help understanding the differences among sheets. Stewart remarks that choosing a set of sheets is mind-boggling and confusing, and says she will be as thorough as possible in the time she is allowed. Stewart begins by displaying and explaining the differences among three different types of cotton: “short staple” is common in America and is the least expensive, “pima” makes a soft fine sheet, and “Egyptian” is the most exclusive. Stewart notes that she learned this information “on a shoot” in Texas.

Next, Stewart moves to different blends of sheets. She believes linen to be the “most exquisite” but also admires cotton ticking, which is made of a complex pattern and made into stripes or plaids. Stewart notes that silk is for “very expensive taste” and requires dry cleaning or hand washing—she thinks it is beautiful, but impractical. Mixes of polyester and cotton are discussed lastly. Stewart says you can feel the difference, these sheets are coarse and scratchy, but are easy because they do not need to be pressed. Finally, Stewart talks about common thread counts and notes that the higher the thread count is, the higher the quality. First she mentions oxford which came from Scotland in the nineteenth century. She states that the fabric is nice and heavy—it is the same as a man’s shirt. To Stewart, oxford is beautiful and lasts a long time. Next is percale, which

she describes as tightly woven with a fine texture and finish. Sateen is luxurious and durable.

After the descriptions, Stewart offers that she chooses her sheets by trying them out one set at a time. She remarks that it has been an involved complicated question, but that she is always happy to answer callers' questions. She thanks Donna and asks her viewers to "keep your questions coming."

The Focus Group Segments

Segment One (3:45) is a "Cooking" segment from *Martha Stewart Living*. In this segment, Stewart teaches viewers to make applesauce from "drop apples," or apples that have dropped from trees to the ground. Stewart argues this is a good way "to do two things at once: not waste the dropped apples and teach you to make applesauce." She encourages the viewers to store the applesauce in the freezer to enjoy it all year. Stewart mentions that she and the staff have been making the applesauce all week and have enjoyed it. Her recipe is "pure puree of apples."

Stewart demonstrates how to peel, core and slice the apples, and she encourages viewers to put the apple peels in their compost piles. As she peels the apples, Stewart suggests the ways in which viewers might use the applesauce in other recipes. She adds the juice of one lemon to the pot of apples and insists that it "adds something very important to my style of applesauce," which she describes as "delicious and clear; it sparkles." Stewart stresses that viewers do not need to add sugar or any other ingredients. As the segment draws to an end, Stewart recommends that viewers go to their farmer's markets or go pick some apples with their children this weekend.

Segment Two (3:30) is a "Gardening" segment from *Martha Stewart Living* that begins with Stewart in her garden at her home on Turkey Hill Road in Connecticut. While she is holding one of her cats, Stewart tells viewers that she has been able to increase her garden by dividing her perennials in one bed and planting them in another. She suggests that fall is the perfect time to divide perennials because the soil is moist and the plants are getting ready to take their "winter rest."

Stewart demonstrates the techniques necessary to divide perennials with Siberian iris, Catmint and Lady's Mantle. She states that dividing the perennials will give viewers "quite a fortune" of plants, because they would pay a lot for the smaller plants at their local nursery. Stewart displays the seven new iris plants she divided from one original plant and remarks that "it's a great thing." When dividing the catmint, Stewart suggests that viewers dry the catmint leaves for their cats—she maintains that her cats love it. Once finished, Stewart asserts that next year she'll have a beautiful garden bed from the plants she has divided and replanted. She stresses that dividing plants keeps your plants healthy and allows you to have more perennials in your garden. As the segment concludes, Stewart encourages viewers to "spread the wealth" because your friends will welcome a gift of perennials from your garden.

Segment Three (1:25) is a "Good Thing" from *From Martha's Kitchen*. In this segment, Stewart responds to numerous questions she reports she has received about how to best store parmigiana reggiano (parmesan cheese). She explains that the best way to store it is to wrap it tightly in plastic wrap and store it in the refrigerator for up to three months.

Next, Stewart gives tips for restoring parmesan cheese that has turned white on the edges and has begun to dry out. She demonstrates how to use a piece of cheesecloth, soak it in water and wring it out well. Then she advises that viewers wrap the cheese in the damp cloth. Stewart emphasizes that the name “cheesecloth” comes of the use of such cloth in the creation of cheeses. Once the parmesan is wrapped in cheesecloth Stewart advises that cheese should be wrapped in cellophane. She instructs viewers to store it in the refrigerator overnight and then remove the cheesecloth, then rewrap the cheese in the cellophane. These steps will restore the cheese. Stewart closes the segment by saying “It’s a good thing.”

Segment Four (6:15) is an “Organizing” segment from *From Martha’s Home*, which begins with Stewart folding towels in front of a large linen closet. She reveals that she “first started dreaming about having a *real* organized linen closet when I was a young girl in Nutley, New Jersey, babysitting for a very nice couple on Elm Place.” She admired the “cupboards” in this home, and admired the neatly folded linens in them. Stewart shares that she hoped that maybe one day she would be just as organized. She acknowledges that it is “hard to be that organized,” but Stewart insists that she can begin to accomplish that goal in “this room that’s sort of devoted to storage.” She tells viewers that she will demonstrate step by step how she organized her closet, which she emphasizes is “useful, orderly and attractive.”

Stewart begins her demonstration with table linens and shows viewers how she rolls her linen napkins around a cardboard roll and covers them, “leaving the ends open” with clear cellophane. She then labels the roll so that she can quickly identify its contents. She organizes linen hand towels similarly. Next, she moves to bath towels and demonstrates how to fold them in thirds so that they are identical and “hang very easily over the towel bars.” Stewart places the folded towels on the shelves and organizes them according to size and color. When discussing her approach to bed sheets, she suggests that you make labels to place on the shelves so you know exactly where to place fitted and flat sheets of various sizes. She keeps everything “really fresh” with homemade sachets made from handkerchiefs and lavender.

Continuing her guided tour through her closet, Stewart demonstrates that she keeps her cocktail napkins and antique linens in pull out drawers and separates them with acid free tissue paper. She notes that viewers can “look on the website to find the source” for the tissue paper. Stewart uses the tissue because it will keep linens from rotting and will help them avoid discoloration. Next, she suggests that when the seasons change it is nice to put away the summer sheets and pull out the flannel sheets. She stores her off-season sheets in canvas and clear plastic bags, which she stresses, allow for visibility and breathability. Stewart moves next to blankets and notes that she has left the label off of the blankets’ shelves; she uses the opportunity to demonstrate how she attaches the brass label holders and labels on to the edge of each shelf. As Stewart emphasizes how clearly everything is labeled, she nails the label holder to the shelves and inserts the “seasonal blankets” label into the holder. She directs viewers to the local hardware store for the label holders and exclaims that “nothing could be easier.”

She closes the doors to that closet and moves to the next, which holds her “great big antique tablecloths and counterpanes for the beds.” Stewart uses hangers that “you can get through your cleaners” because they have rounded cardboard holders on them

that keep your linens from becoming wrinkled. She hangs tags from the top of the hanger that clearly indicate the size of the item hanging on it and suggests that after you iron the item you put a piece of acid free tissue paper under and over the item and hang it on the hanger. This method, Stewart advises, can be used with tablecloths, lace curtains and antique linens. Very fine old linens, like Stewart's, which have just come back from a restorer, should be stored big round cardboard rolls wrapped in tissue paper and a plastic bag. Stewart shows the viewer how these rolls stand in the back of her closet. This segment concludes with Stewart's assertion that "organizing your linens like this is just one of the many tasks you have as a homemaker." She offers that once you do this task, it never has to be done again. You can then "proceed to the next task at hand."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A picture-perfect target. (2000, January 17). *Business Week*, 3664, 72.
- A taste of Provence. (1991, September/October). *Martha Stewart Living*, 42-51.
- A treasury of trees. (1990, Winter). *Martha Stewart Living*, 66-73.
- Abramovitch, I. (1995, April). A Passover seder. *Martha Stewart Living*, 100-107.
- Adams, M. (1996, March 4). The franchise. *Adweek*, 37, MR10+. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Adler, J. (1994, December/January 1995). Caviar. *Martha Stewart Living*, 106-111.
- Adorno, T. (1954). How to look at television. *Quarterly Review of Film, Radio and Television*, 8, 213-235.
- Aldoory, L., & Toth, E. L. (2001). The complexities of feminist in communication scholarship today. *Communication Yearbook*, 24, 345-361.
- Aleman, M. W. (2000, June). *Enamoring, emulating and familiarizing Martha: The creation of Martha Stewart, a popular culture icon*. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Communication Association, Acapulco, Mexico.
- Alexander, M. (2002, November). Preserving a family history. *Martha Stewart Living*, 200-207.
- All Hallows' eve. (1991, September/October). *Martha Stewart Living*, 90-97.
- Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy*. London: New Left Books.
- Ambroz, J. (2002, February 1). Martha Stewart's everyday troubles. *Folio*, 31, 15. Retrieved April 22, 2007 from the Business Source Premier database.
- American Academy of Achievement (n.d.) Martha Stewart Biography. Retrieved April 5, 2006 from: <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/ste0bio-1>
- Anderson, B. (2000). *Doing the dirty work?: The global politics of domestic labour*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Anderson, K. V. (1998, Winter). "Rhymes with rich": "Bitch" as a tool of containment in contemporary American politics. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 2, 599-623.

- Ang, I. (with Hermes, J.). (1996). Gender and/in media consumption. In I. Ang (Ed.), *Living room wars: Rethinking media audiences for a postmodern world*. (pp. 109-132). New York: Routledge.
- Ang, I. (1985). *Watching Dallas: Soap opera and the melodramatic imagination*. New York: Routledge.
- Asimov, E. (1998, April). Passover desserts. *Martha Stewart Living*, 106-112.
- Asimov, E. (1999, April). Matzo balls. *Martha Stewart Living*, 132-136.
- askMartha. (1999, July/August). *Martha Stewart Living*, 54-58.
- Associated Press. (2004, March 8). Stewart's program taken off CBS, UPN. *The New York Times*. Retrieved March 8, 2004 from <http://nytimes.com>
- Anzaladua, G. (1988). *La frontera/Borderlands*. Spinsters Ink, San Francisco.
- Baker, C. (2001, December). Tabletop trees. *Martha Stewart Living*, 162-171.
- Barbour, C. (1993a, February/March). Private spaces. *Martha Stewart Living*, 74-83.
- Barbour, C. (1993b, April/May). Mother's Day lunch. *Martha Stewart Living*, 92-97.
- Barbour, C. (1993c, August/September). The art of the deal. *Martha Stewart Living*, 62-67.
- Barbour, C. (1994, September). A farm stand dinner. *Martha Stewart Living*, 52-57.
- Barbour, C. (1995a, March). Ski retreat. *Martha Stewart Living*, 72-79.
- Barbour, C. (1995b, October). The art of reweaving. *Martha Stewart Living*, 46-50.
- Barbour, C. (1996a, October). Mantels. *Martha Stewart Living*, 132-139.
- Barbour, C. (1996b, November). Thanksgiving at Auldbrass. *Martha Stewart Living*, 122-127.
- Barbour, C. (1996c, December). Christmas at Martha's. *Martha Stewart Living*, 136-143.
- Barbour, C. (1997, November). Thanksgiving at the Elms. *Martha Stewart Living*, 182-187.
- Barker, O. (2004, July 19). Martha lets the bad times roll. *USA Today*. Retrieved December 12, 2008 from Academic Search Premier database.

- Barnett, A. C. (1992, June/July). Fourth of July. *Martha Stewart Living*, 92-101.
- Beecher, M. A. (2001, Summer). The mythical making Martha. *American Studies*, 42, 113-122.
- Benjamin, W. (1978). The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction. *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken, 219-253.
- Bentley, A. (2001, Summer). Martha's food: Whiteness of a certain kind. *American Studies*, 42, 89-100.
- Berman, A. (1995, November). Transfer ware. *Martha Stewart Living*, 84-89.
- Betting on the buzz. (2005, August 1). *Business Week Online*. Retrieved July 27, 2005 from: <http://businessweek.com>
- Bland, E. (1988, December 19). A new guru of American taste? *Time*, 132, 92. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Block, A. (2000, May). Simple sewing repairs. *Martha Stewart Living*, 112-118.
- Bloomberg News. (2004, September 4). Martha Stewart signs 5-year contract. *The New York Times*. Retrieved September 20, 2004 from <http://nytimes.com>
- Bobo, J. (2003). The Color Purple: Black women as cultural readers. In W. Brooker & D. Jermyn (Eds.), *The audience studies reader* (305-314). London, Routledge, 2003.
- Boswell, F. (1998a, March). A cook's garden. *Martha Stewart Living*, pp. 188-195.
- Boswell, F. (1998b, December/January 1999). Twas the night before Christmas. *Martha Stewart Living*, 194-203.
- Boswell, F. (1999, November). Thanksgiving barbeque. *Martha Stewart Living*, 204-213.
- Boswell, F. (2001, April). Easter at the blue barn. *Martha Stewart Living*, 181-189.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1979).
- Bourdieu, P. (1997). The forms of capital. In A. Halsey, H. Lauder, P. Brown & A Stuart Wells (Eds.), *Education: culture, economy, and society* (pp. 46-58). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Bowleg, L. (2008, September). When black + lesbian + woman \neq black lesbian woman: The methodological challenges of qualitative and quantitative intersectionality research. *Sex Roles*, 59, 312-325.
- Brenner, D. (2001, August). Editor's Letter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 24.
- Brenner, D. (2002, December). Editor's letter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 24.
- Brink, J. F. (1999, September). Wastepaper baskets. *Martha Stewart Living*, 132-138.
- Brink, J. F. (2000, February). Glues. *Martha Stewart Living*, 114-120.
- Brink, J. F. (2001a, June). Detailing a car. *Martha Stewart Living*, 130-134.
- Brink, J. F. (2001b, December). Dreidels. *Martha Stewart Living*, 100-106.
- Brink, J. F. (2002, May). Alexis's cottage. *Martha Stewart Living*, 106-112.
- Brown, M. E. (1994). *Soap opera and women's talk: the pleasure of resistance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Brunsdon, C. (1997). *Screen tastes: Soap opera to satellite dishes*. London: Routledge.
- Brunt, R. (1992). Engaging with the popular: Audiences for mass culture and what to say about them. In L. Grossberg, C. Nelson & P. A. Treichler (Eds.), *Cultural Studies* (pp. 69-76). New York: Routledge.
- Burnett, M. (Executive Producer). (2005, September 12). *Martha* [Television Broadcast]. Jefferson City, MO: KCRG.
- Burnett, M. (Executive Producer). (2005, September 13). *Martha* [Television Broadcast]. Jefferson City, MO: KCRG.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, Inc.
- Butler, J. (1992). Contingent foundations: Feminism and the question of "postmodernism." In J. Butler & J. W. Scott (Eds.), *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 3-21). New York: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1997, Fall/Winter). Merely cultural. *Social Text*, 52-53, 265-277.
- Can "a good thing" last? (n.d.) *CNN*. Retrieved May 5, 2002 from <http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/people/shows/stewart/profile.html>

- Carey, J. W. (1989). *Communication as culture: Essays on media and society*. Boston: Unwin.
- Carey, J. W. (1982). The mass media and critical theory: An American view. *Communication Yearbook*, 6, 18-33.
- Carr, D. (2003, June 5). For the press, a case that is an irresistible draw. *The New York Times*, C5.
- Carr, D. (2005, August 29). Martha Stewart, unchained. *The New York Times*, Retrieved August 29, 2005 from <http://nytimes.com>
- Carter, B. (2005, August 26). Issues of past not off limits in TV return, Stewart says. *The New York Times*, Retrieved May 14, 2002 from <http://nytimes.com>
- Celebrating Flag Day (2004, June). *Martha Stewart Living*, 35-36.
- Chang, G. (2000). *Disposable domestics: Immigrant women workers in the global economy*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.
- Charlé, S. (1997, November). Pewter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 190-195.
- Chartier, J. (2002, July 24). Martha loses some luster. *CNN Money*. Retrieved October 7, 2002 from <http://money.cnn.com>
- Christopher, T. (2002, June). "Peas." *Martha Stewart Living*, pp. 170-177.
- Chrysler signs deal with Martha Stewart. (2002, May 1) *New York Times*, C7. Retrieved April 22, 2007 from ProQuest Historical Newspapers database.
- Cirksena, K. (1996). Feminism after ferment: Ten years of gendered scholarship in communications. In D. Allen, R. R. Rush & S. J. Kaufman (Eds.), *Women transforming communications: Global intersections* (pp. 153-160). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Citrus. (1992, December/January 1993). *Martha Stewart Living*, 82-87.
- Coffee, K. (2001, April). Ruffles. *Martha Stewart Living*, 206-215.
- Cohen, J. R. (1991). The relevance of cultural identity in audience's interpretations of mass media. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 8, 442-454.
- Collector's cottage. (1991, Spring). *Martha Stewart Living*, 88-95.
- Condit, C. (1989). The rhetorical limits of polysemy. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 6, 103-122.

- Connor, T. (1994). *Is Martha Stewart living?* LOCATION? Southport Beach Productions.
- Connor, T. (1996). *Martha Stuart's better than you at entertaining*. New York: HarperTrade.
- Connor, T. (1998). *Martha Stuart's excruciatingly perfect weddings*. New York: HarperTrade.
- Contents. (1993, October/November). *Martha Stewart Living*, 13-14.
- Contents. (1994a, November). *Martha Stewart Living*, 9-12.
- Contents. (1994b, December/January 1995). *Martha Stewart Living*, 9-12.
- Contents. (1995, May). *Martha Stewart Living*, 13-14.
- Contents. (1999, September). *Martha Stewart Living*, 26-30.
- Contents. (2001, September). *Martha Stewart Living*, 16-20.
- Contents. (2004, March). *Martha Stewart Living*, 11-12.
- Conway, A. (1997, April). Sugar eggs. *Martha Stewart Living*, 128-133.
- Conway, A. (1998a, April). Monograms. *Martha Stewart Living*, 172-177.
- Conway, A. (1998b, September). Children's haircuts. *Martha Stewart Living*, 190-198.
- Conway, A. (1998c, September). Fiesta Cubana. *Martha Stewart Living*, 228-235.
- Conway, A. (1999, July/August). Flags. *Martha Stewart Living*, 134-139.
- Coplan, J. H. (2002a, July). Finding a financial planner. *Martha Stewart Living*, 128-131.
- Coplan, J. H. (2002b, November). What you need to know before writing a will. *Martha Stewart Living*, 128-132.
- Countdown to the holidays. (1998, November). *Martha Stewart Living*, 76.
- Cowan, A. L. (2002, April 14). Jaw-dropping tales of excess and success. *The New York Times*, p. B5.
- Crawford, K. (2004, September 15). Martha ready to do time. *CNN Money*. Retrieved September 14, 2007 from <http://money.cnn.com>

- DaimlerChrysler ends Martha Stewart Living Ad Deal. (2003, January 8). *Yahoo! News*. Retrieved January 8, 2003 from <http://news.yahoo.com>
- Davis, A. Y. (1998). The approaching obsolescence of housework: A working-class perspective. In J. James (Ed.), *The Angela Y. Davis reader* (193-209). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Dessert of the month. (2002, June). *Martha Stewart Living*, 43-44.
- Didion, J. (2000, February 21 & 28). Everywoman.com. *The New Yorker*, 270-279.
- Dignam, C. (2001, August). Even Martha struggles in U.S. market downturn. *Ad Age Global*, 1, 7.
- D'acci, J. (1994). *Defining women: Television and the case of Cagney & Lacey*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- D'Innocenzio, A. (2004, March 15). Martha Stewart quits company board. *Yahoo! News*. Retrieved March 15, 2004 from <http://news.yahoo.com>
- Do you know?. (1998, June). *Martha Stewart Living*, 44.
- Do you know? (2000, March). *Martha Stewart Living*, 58.
- Do you know? (2001, September). *Martha Stewart Living*, 50.
- Dobrow, L. (2006, October 23). Lyne stems loss, grows Martha empire. *Advertising Age*, 77, S8. Retrieved May 14, 2008 from the Academic Search Premier database.
- Donaton, S. (1991, December 9). "Martha Stewart" is cooking. *Advertising Age*, 62, 16.
- Doran, J. (2003, January 28). ImClone costs 'guru' \$400m. *The Times* (United Kingdom), p. 25.
- Doty, A. (1995). There's something queer here. In C. K. Creekmur & A. Doty (Eds.), *Out in culture: Gay, lesbian and queer essays on popular culture* (pp. 71-90). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Dow, B. J. & Condit, C. M. (2005). The state of the art in feminist scholarship in communication. *Journal of Communication*, 55, 448-478.
- Dowd, M. (2005, March 6). Taming of the shrews. *The New York Times*. Retrieved March 7, 2005 from <http://nytimes.com>
- Drucker, S. (1998a, April). Editor's letter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 22.

- Drucker, S. (1998b, March). Editor's letter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 26.
- Drucker, S. (1998c, June). Editor's letter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 26.
- Drucker, S. (1998d, September). Editor's letter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 29.
- Drucker, S. (1998e, December/January 1999). Editor's letter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 33.
- Drucker, S. (1999a, February). Editor's letter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 28.
- Drucker, S. (1999b, April). Editor's letter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 36.
- Drucker, S. (2000, April). Editor's letter. *Martha Stewart Living*, 40.
- Dudden, F. E. (1983). *Serving women: Household service in nineteenth-century America*. Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press.
- Dyer, R. (1986). *Heavenly bodies: Film stars and society*. New York: Routledge.
- Dyer, R. (1997). *White*. New York: Routledge.
- Earle, S. (2004, January). The perfect lamp. *Martha Stewart Living*, 80-83.
- Ehrenreich, B. & English, D. (1978). *For her own good: 150 years of experts' advice to women*. New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday.
- Ermann, N. (2004, June). Road trips. *Martha Stewart Living*, 106-112.
- Evans, S. (1991, July/August). Flea markets. *Martha Stewart Living*, 22-24.
- Everything's coming up Martha. (2005, September 12). *CNN.com*. Retrieved September 12, 2005 from http://www.cnn.com/2005/SHOWBIZ/TV/09/12/apontv.marthastewart.ap/index.html?section=cnn_showbiz
- Feiring, A. (1994, November). A Thanksgiving with friends. *Martha Stewart Living*, 70-77.
- Finch, K. U. (1996, October). Credit-card meltdown. *Martha Stewart Living*, 72-76.
- Fine, J. (2000, October 16). Martha's world. *Advertising Age*, 71, 1. Retrieved March 15, 2007 from Thomson Gale database.
- Fine, J. & Friedman, W. (2003, June 9). Martha partners offer lukewarm support. *Advertising Age*, 74, 1.

- Fiske, J. (1990). *Introduction to communication studies* (2nd ed). New York: Routledge.
- Find of the month. (1999a, March). *Martha Stewart Living*, 76.
- Find of the month. (1999b, June). *Martha Stewart Living*, 60.
- Find of the month. (1999c, December/January 2000). *Martha Stewart Living*, 82.
- Find of the month. (2000, April). *Martha Stewart Living*, 72.
- Find of the month. (2002, August). *Martha Stewart Living*, 49.
- Fit to eat. (1997, June). *Martha Stewart Living*, 142-146.
- Fit to eat. (2001, October). *Martha Stewart Living*, 242-246.
- Fonseca, I. (1996, October). A quiet house. *Martha Stewart Living*, 118-125.
- Fox, M. (1998, August 1). In Martha 101, even class anxieties get ironed out. *The New York Times*, B7.
- Franklin, S., Lury, C. & Stacey, J. (1996). Feminism and cultural studies: Pasts, presents, futures. In J. Storey (Ed). *What is cultural studies anyway: A reader* (pp. 255-272). London: Arnold.
- Freeman, M, Granatstein, L., & Perrucci, D. (1998, April 20). Media Wire: With Gayle's demise, is Martha getting more room? *Mediaweek* 8, 4(3). Retrieved April 8, 2008 from the Communication and Mass Media Complete database.
- Galitzki, D. (1999, March). Fertilizer 101. *Martha Stewart Living*, 106-110.
- Gallagher, M. (1989). A feminist paradigm for communication research. In B. Dervin, L. Grossberg, B. J. O'Keefe, & E. Wartella (Eds.), *Rethinking communication: Volume 2* (pp. 75-86). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Garskof, J. (2001, September). Financing a home improvement. *Martha Stewart Living*, 110-114.
- Gauchat, M. & Rill, L. (2005). Women in power turned sour: An analysis of framing and gendered discourse of Martha Stewart in *The New York Times* and *USA Today*.
- Gentle reminders. (2003, September). *Martha Stewart Living*, 4.

- Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M., & Signorielli, N. (1994). Growing up with television: The cultivation perspective. In J. Bryant & D. Zillman (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Gerston, J. (2004, June). Flower power. *Martha Stewart Living*, 108-117.
- Gogoi, P. (2005a, August 9). All Martha, all the time. *Business Week Online*. Retrieved August 10, 2005 from <http://businessweekonline>
- Gogoi, P. (2005b, October 28). Can Martha tidy up this mess? *Business Week Online*. Retrieved May 14, 2008 from <http://businessweekonline>
- Gogoi, P. (2006, April 7). Martha and Macy's: A mutual attraction. *Business Week Online*. Retrieved May 14, 2008 from the Academic Search Premier database.
- Golec, M. J. (2006). *Martha Stewart Living* and the marketing of Emersonian perfectionism. *Home Cultures*, 3, 1-24.
- Good Things. (1990, Winter). *Martha Stewart Living*, 11-14.
- Good Things. (1993, April/May). *Martha Stewart Living*, 23-30.
- Good Things. (1994, April/May). *Martha Stewart Living*, 23-30.
- Good Things. (1995a, February). *Martha Stewart Living*, 27-34.
- Good Things. (1995b, March). *Martha Stewart Living*, 29-38.
- Good Things. (1995c, April). *Martha Stewart Living*, 35-44.
- Good Things. (1996a, April). *Martha Stewart Living*, 41-48.
- Good Things. (1996b, December/January 1997). *Martha Stewart Living*, 55-70.
- Good Things. (1997a, July/August). *Martha Stewart Living*, 57-62.
- Good Things. (1997b, December/January 1998). *Martha Stewart Living*, 63-84.
- Good Things. (1998, July/August). *Martha Stewart Living*, 57-70.
- Good Things. (1999, April). *Martha Stewart Living*, 97-110.
- Good Things. (2001a, April). *Martha Stewart Living*, 83-94.
- Good Things. (2001b, July). *Martha Stewart Living*, 65-70.

- Good Things. (2002a, February). *Martha Stewart Living*, 55-64.
- Good Things. (2002b, April). *Martha Stewart Living*, 79-88.
- Good Things. (2004a, March). *Martha Stewart Living*, 39-44.
- Good Things. (2004b, April). *Martha Stewart Living*, 51-58.
- Good Things. (2004c, July). *Martha Stewart Living*, 29-35.
- Gordon, A. (2001a, August). From this to that. *Martha Stewart Living*, 144-153.
- Gordon, A. (2001b, November). Napkin folding. *Martha Stewart Living*, 218-225.
- Gordon, A. (2003, February). A Mexican feast in a Texas garden. *Martha Stewart Living*, 132-137.
- Gordon, M. (1991). Heart-shaped wreaths, perfume-sprayed notepaper, ribbon-wrapped linens – is this what women want? *Working Woman*, 16, 74(4). Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Gough, P. J. (2004, May 10). “Martha Stewart” will keep on living, but Omnimedia downplays name. *MediaPost Communications*. Retrieved May 24, 2004 from <http://www.mediapost.com>
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci* (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell, Eds. & Trans.). New York: International Publishers.
- Grass menagerie. (1993, April/May). *Martha Stewart Living*, 78-81.
- Gray, A. (1987). Reading the Audience: Ann Gray on new studies of televiewing. *Screen*, 28, 25-34.
- Gray, J. (2003). New audiences, new textualities: anti-fans and non-fans. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6, 64-81.
- Green, M. (1995, October 2). The best revenge. *People Weekly*, 45, 100. Retrieved April 14, 2006 from the Thomson Gale database.
- Gregory, S. & Kadlec, D. (2002, December 9). Happy holidays, Martha. *Time*, 160, 29. Retrieved April 8, 2008 from the ABI/INFORM Global database.
- Gremillion, J. (1997, February 10). Taking Martha private: New financial life may be ahead for Stewart’s “Living.” *Mediaweek*, 6, 10. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.

- Greppi, M. (2005, October 24). Perfecting 'Martha.' *Television Week*, 8. Retrieved May 14, 2008 from the Academic Search Premier database.
- Greppi, M. (2007, April 2). Upfront with Martha. *Television Week*, 26, 12.
- Gross, D. (2002, June 26). Martha Stewart's rough trade. *The Street*. Retrieved October 7, 2002 from <http://www.thestreet.com>
- Grossman, B. (2006, October 30). Upheaval at 'Martha Stewart.' *Broadcasting & Cable*, 3+.
- Gurevitch, M. & Scannell, P. (2003). Canonization achieved?: Stuart Hall's 'Encoding/Decoding.'" In E. Katz, J. D. Peters, T. Liebes, & A. Orloff (Eds.), *Canon texts in media research* (231-247). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc.
- Hall, S. (1980a). Cultural studies and the Centre: some problematics and problems. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe and P. Willis (Eds). *Culture, media, language: Working papers in cultural studies 1972-197* (pp. 15-47). London: Hutchinson.
- Hall, S. (1980b). Encoding/Decoding. In S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe and P. Willis (Eds). *Culture, media, language: Working papers in cultural studies 1972-197* (pp. 128-138). London: Hutchinson.
- Hall, S. (1990, Summer). The emergence of Cultural Studies and the crisis in the humanities. *October*, 11-24.
- Hall, S. (1994). Reflections upon the encoding/decoding model: An interview with Stuart Hall. In J. Cruz & J. Lewis (Eds.), *Reading, viewing, listening* (pp. 253-274). Boulder, CO: Westview.
- Hall, S. (1996). Cultural Studies and its theoretical legacies. In D. Morley & K. Chen (Eds). *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies* (pp. 262-275). London: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (1997a). Representation, meaning and language. In S. Hall (Ed). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (pp. 16-64). London: Sage.
- Hall, S. (1997b). The spectacle of the 'Other.' In S. Hall (Ed.), *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices* (pp. 225-290). London, Sage.
- Hall, T. (1998a, April). An Easter gathering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 154-161.
- Hall, T. (1998b, November). Thanksgiving parade party. *Martha Stewart Living*, 194-201.

- Hall, T. (1998c, December/January 1999). Hanukkah. *Martha Stewart Living*, 210-215.
- Hall, T. (1999, February). "Communicating with a pet." *Martha Stewart Living*, pp. 72-76.
- Hall, T. (1999, June). A taste of India. *Martha Stewart Living*, 170-177.
- Halliday, J. (1998, August 31). Ford takes Martha for a \$50 mil spin. *Advertising Age*, 1. Retrieved March 15, 2007, from Thomson Gale database.
- Halloween workbook. (2000, October). *Martha Stewart Living*, 272-286.
- Hamilton, B. (1994, June/July). Choosing music. *Martha Stewart Living*, 40-46.
- Hamilton, W. L. (1994a, August). The little house that could. *Martha Stewart Living*, pp. 62-71.
- Hamilton, W. L. (1994b, November). Outfitting a guest room. *Martha Stewart Living*, 38-44.
- Hamilton, W. L. (1995a, March). The pros and cons of commercial stoves. *Martha Stewart Living*, 50-57.
- Hamilton, W. L. (1995b, May). Yard sale. *Martha Stewart Living*, 72-77.
- Hamilton, W. L. (1995c, September). Is there a doctor in the house? *Martha Stewart Living*, 106-115.
- Hamilton, W. L. (1996a, February). Plumbing repairs. *Martha Stewart Living*, 52-59.
- Hamilton, W. L. (1996b, May). Vintage brackets. *Martha Stewart Living*, 74-78.
- Hamilton, W. L. (1996c, May). Shelves. *Martha Stewart Living*, 94-103.
- Hamilton, W. L. (1996d, September). Dream kitchen. *Martha Stewart Living*, 128-135.
- Harding, S. (1987). Introduction: Is there a feminist method? In S. Harding (Ed.), *Feminism and methodology: Social science issues* (pp. 1-14). Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Hartocollis, A. (1994, December/January 1995). Hiring a professional. *Martha Stewart Living*, 64-69.
- Hartocollis, A. (1996, April). A Greek Easter dinner. *Martha Stewart Living*, 108-115.

- Hay, A. (1997, November). "Demystifying the diswasher." *Martha Stewart Living*, pp. 116-122.
- Hays, C. (2004a, July 16). Stewart sentenced to 5 months in prison for lying to investigators. *The New York Times*. Retrieved July 20, 2004 from <http://nytimes.com>
- Hays, C. (2004b, August 4). Stewart's woes hurt company. *The New York Times*, p. C1. Retrieved August 26, 2004 from the LexisNexis Academic database.
- Hays, E. (2007, November 18). Stewart's "Big Martha" dead at 93. *Daily News (New York)*, p. 6. Retrieved December 24, 2007 from the Lexis Nexis database.
- Heeger, S. (2003, March). An artist's New England getaway." *Martha Stewart Living*, 72-76.
- Hess, V. K. (2001, May). *Making sense of Martha Stewart Living*. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Communication Association, Washington, D.C.
- Hills, M. (2002). *Fan Cultures*. Routledge, New York.
- Hinds, J. (2005, August 25). Good Martha, mean Martha. *Detroit Free Press*. Retrieved August 29, 2005 from <http://freep.com>
- Hine, T. (2001a, October). Make-dos and whimsies. *Martha Stewart Living*, 190-197.
- Hine, T. (2001b, November). Chinese export porcelain. *Martha Stewart Living*, 194-200.
- hooks, bell. (1989). *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking black*. South End Press, Boston, MA.
- hooks, bell. (1992). *Black looks: Race and representation*. Boston, South End Press.
- Horn, M. (1997, March 3). Martha Stewart living large. *U.S. News & World Report*, 122, 59. Retrieved April 5, 2006 from Expanded Academic ASAP via Thomson Gale.
- Horton, D. & Wohl, R. R. (1982). Mass communication and para-social interaction: Observations on intimacy at a distance. In G. Gumpert & R. Cathcart (Eds.), *Inter/Media: Interpersonal Communication in a Mediated World* (pp. 188-211). (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press. (Reprinted from 1956 *Psychiatry*, 19 pp. 215-229)
- Hubbard, K. (1988, November 28). Martha Stewart, The one-woman industry, adds a new line for K Mart and subtracts a husband. *People Weekly*, 30. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.

- Huber, J. (2002, November). An owner's guide to rug and carpet care. *Martha Stewart Living*, 138-144.
- Huber, J. (2004, July). Choosing and using the right sponge. *Martha Stewart Living*, 52-55.
- Huhn, M. (1993, November 15). Changes afoot for Martha Stewart. *Mediaweek*, 3, 2. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Huhn, M. (1994, Dec 12). Martha Stewart, Ltd. *Mediaweek*, 4, 4. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Hyland, M. G. (2001, Summer). Martha Stewart's living landscapes. *American Studies*, 42, 101-111.
- Ice cream. (1991, July/August). *Martha Stewart Living*, 62-71.
- Irwin, N. (2004, March 8). For the Stewart brand, an uncertain future. *The Washington Post*, A04. Retrieved May 6, 2007 from LexisNexis database.
- Isle, R. (2000, July/August). Coasters. *Martha Stewart Living*, 114-120.
- Isle, R. (2002, August). Designer barware. *Martha Stewart Living*, 90-98.
- Iverson, A. (1992, June/July). Summer lunch. *Martha Stewart Living*, 52-57.
- Ives, N. (2006, January 16). Rebuilding Martha's empire. *Advertising Age*, 77, 9.
- Ives, N. (2008, February 25). What it took Martha eight years to nab Emeril. *Advertising Age*, 79, 8. Retrieved May 14, 2008 from the Academic Search Premier database.
- Jack, L. (1992, June/July). Gilding a mirror. *Martha Stewart Living*, 22-25.
- Jamieson, K. H. (1995). *Beyond the double bind: Women and leadership*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Jenkins, H. (1988). Star Trek rerun, reread, rewritten: fan writing as textual poaching. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 5, 85-107.
- Jensen, J. (1992). Fandom as pathology: the consequences of characterization. In L.A. Lewis (Ed.), *The adoring audience: Fan culture and popular media* (pp. 9-29). New York: Routledge.
- Jhally, S. & Lewis, J. (1992). *Enlightened racism: The Cosby Show, audiences, and the myth of the American dream*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

- Johnson, R. (1996). What is cultural studies anyway? In Storey, J. (Ed.), *What is Cultural Studies Anyway?: A Reader* (pp. 75-114). Ed. John Storey. London: Arnold.
- Johnson, R. (2004). Reading popular narratives: From structure to context. In R. Johnson, D. Chambers, P. Raghuram & E. Tincknell (Eds.), *The practice of cultural studies* (pp. 157-169). London: Sage.
- Kadlec, D. (2001, July 1). Martha's new ruffle. *Time*, 160, 39.
- Kaplan, M. (2002, December). The eternal glow of antique menorahs. *Martha Stewart Living*, 108-114.
- Kaplan, M. (2003, April). Marbelizing eggs. *Martha Stewart Living*, 176-183.
- Karch, F. (2001, January). Had to have it. *Martha Stewart Living*, 174-183.
- Kasindorf, J. R. (1995, June). Martha Inc. *Working Woman*, 20, 26(9). Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Katz, E., & Lazarsfeld, P. F. (1955). *Personal Influence: The Part Played by People in the Flow of Mass Communication*. New York: Free Press.
- Katz, E. & Liebes, T. (1985). Mutual aid in the decoding of Dallas. In P. Drummond & R. Patterson (Eds.), *Television in Transition* (pp. 187-198). London: British Film Institute.
- Katz, E. (1987). Communications research since Lazarsfeld. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 51, S25-S45.
- Kearney, B. T. (2001, August). Souvenir spoons. *Martha Stewart Living*, 94-100.
- Kellner, D. (2003). Cultural studies, multiculturalism, and media culture. In G. Dines & J. M. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, race, and class in media: A text-reader* (2nd ed., pp. 9-20). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kelts, R. (2002, January 2). Land of the rising homemaker. *Salon*. Retrieved January 8, 2003 from <http://www.salon.com>
- Kerwin, A. M. (1997, March 15). Stewart becomes head of her publishing household. *Folio*, 26, 14.
- Kerwin, A. M. (1999, April 5). "B. Smith Style" already ad-page hit: Entrepreneur sees niche between "Essence" and "Martha Stewart." *Advertising Age*, 70, 16.
- Kessler, B. (1994, October). "Chickens." *Martha Stewart Living*, 74-79.

- Kingston, A. (2006, November 13). Martha Stewart just isn't herself. *Maclean's*, 119, 6.
- Koeppel, D. (2002, May). Road trips. *Martha Stewart Living*, 195-205.
- Koncius, Jura. (2002, October 17). Will Martha's sofas sit well in High Point? *Daily Hampshire Gazette* p. D7.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002a, September 26). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002b, September 27). *From Martha's garden* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002c, September 27). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002d, October 7). *From Martha's garden* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002e, October 7). *From Martha's home* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002f, October 7). *From Martha's kitchen* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY: Food Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002g, October 7). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002h, October 8). *From Martha's garden* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002i, October 8). *From Martha's home* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002j, October 8). *From Martha's kitchen* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY: Food Network. [parmesan cheese]
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002k, October 8). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002l, October 9). *From Martha's home* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002m, October 9). *From Martha's garden* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.

- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002n, October 9). *From Martha's kitchen* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY: Food Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002o, October 9). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002p, October 10). *From Martha's home* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002q, October 10). *From Martha's kitchen* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY: Food Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002r, October 11). *From Martha's home* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002s, October 11). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002t, November 4). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002u, November 6). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002v, November 8). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002w, November 10). *From Martha's home* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002x, November 13). *From Martha's garden* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002y, November 13). *From Martha's home* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002z, November 13). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002aa, November 14). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002bb, November 15). *From Martha's home* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.

- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2002cc, November 29). *Christmas from Martha's home* [Television broadcast]. Knoxville, TN: Home and Garden Television.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2003a, January 18). *From Martha's kitchen* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY: Food Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2003b, May 22). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2003c, May 26). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2003d, November 19). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2003e, November 22). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2003f, November 25). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. New Bloomfield, MO: KNLJ.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2004a, February 21). *From Martha's kitchen* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY: Food Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2004b, March 8). *From Martha's kitchen* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY: Food Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2004c, March 13). *From Martha's kitchen* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY: Food Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2004d, July 12). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. Los Angeles, CA: Style Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2004e, July 19). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. Los Angeles, CA: Style Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2004f, July 20). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. Los Angeles, CA: Style Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2004g, July 21). *Martha Stewart Living* [Television broadcast]. Los Angeles, CA: Style Network.
- Krzyzanowski, E. (Executive Producer). (2004h, June 29). *From Martha's kitchen* [Television broadcast]. New York, NY: Food Network. [flag cookies]

- Kuczynski, A. (2004, April 18). On this accessory, the jury isn't out. *The New York Times*. Retrieved December 12, 2008 from <http://nytimes.com>.
- Lafferty, E. (2004). An open letter from Ms. in support of Martha Stewart. *Ms. Magazine Online*. Retrieved May 24, 2004 from <http://www.msmagazine.com>
- Lather, P. (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, Inc.
- Lavin, C. (1996, February 15). The house of Stewart. *The Chicago Tribune*. Retrieved July 9, 2007 from the NewsBank database.
- Leavitt, S. A. (2001, Summer). It was always a good thing: Historical precedents for Martha Stewart. *American Studies*, 42, 125-131.
- Leavitt, S. A. (2002). *From Catharine Beecher to Martha Stewart: A cultural history of domestic advice*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Letters to the editor. (1996a, March). *Martha Stewart Living*, 12.
- Letters to the editor. (1996b, July/August). *Martha Stewart Living*, 22.
- Letters to the editor. (1996c, September). *Martha Stewart Living*, 24.
- Letters to the editor. (1996d, October). *Martha Stewart Living*, 28.
- Lewis, J. (1983, April). The encoding/decoding model: Problems and redevelopments for research on decoding. *Media, Culture and Society*, 5, 179-197.
- Lewis, J. (1991). *The Ideological Octopus: An Exploration of Television & Its Audience*. New York: Routledge.
- Lewis, L. A. (1992). *The adoring audience: fan culture and popular media*, Routledge, New York.
- Littleton, C. (1996, August 26). Martha Stewart grows to six days a week. *Broadcasting & Cable*, 126, 13.
- Littleton, C. (1997, January 6). Weeklies find their niche. *Broadcasting & Cable*, 127, 56 (2). Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Lippert, B. (1995, May 15). Our Martha, ourselves. *New York*, 28, 27-35.

- Lowery, S. A. & DeFleur, M. L. (1995). *Milestones in mass communication research: media effects*. White Plains, N.Y.: Longman Publishers USA.
- Lunt, P. & Livingstone, S. (1996, Spring). Rethinking the focus group in media and communications research. *Journal of Communication*, 46, 79-98.
- Lyttle, B. (2001, February). Embroidery 101. *Martha Stewart Living*, 166-173.
- Lyttle, B. (2002, February). Quilling valentines. *Martha Stewart Living*, 142-149.
- Marin, R. (1995, December 11). Be-Marthas, do-Marthas and beyond Martha.” *Newsweek* 126, 74. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Marling, K. A. (2001, Summer). The revenge of Mrs. Santa Claus or Martha Stewart does Christmas. *American Studies*, 42, 33-138.
- Marsano, B. (1993, October/November). Sail charters. *Martha Stewart Living*, 52-57.
- Martha: Cue the triumphant comeback music. *Maclean's*, 119, 20.
- Martha Inc. (2000, January 17). *Business Week*, 3664, 62-72. Retrieved April 14, 2006, from the Thomson Gale database.
- Martha Stewart: Empress of “how-to.” (1996, June 17). *Time*, 147, 74 (2). Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Martha Stewart Living*. (1990, Winter).
- Martha Stewart Living*. (2000, September).
- Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. (1999, October 12). *About Martha*. Retrieved June 19, 2008 from http://web.archive.org/web/20000706231926/www.marthastewart.com/about_martha/index.asp
- Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. (2002). “Editorial Contents.” Promotional materials for advertisers.
- Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. (2003). “Editorial Diversity.” Promotional materials for advertisers.
- Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. (2004). *Television program guide: Martha Stewart Living on Style Network for July 21, 2004*. Retrieved July, 22, 2004, from <http://www.marthastewart.com>.

Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. (n.d.). Audience profiles. Promotional materials for advertisers.

Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. (n.d.). Martha Stewart Weddings. Promotional materials for advertisers.

Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. (n.d.). Mission statement. Promotional materials for advertisers.

Martha Stewart will write weekly feature. (1995, October 288). *Editor & Publisher* 128, 35. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.

Martha Stewart's \$1.4m. (2004, June 5). *The Times* (United Kingdom), p. 60. Received July 17, 2008 from Academic Search Premier database.

Martha stirs up tasty prison treats. (2004, October 20). *CNN Money*. Retrieved October 20, 2004 from:
http://money.cnn.com/2004/10/20/news/newsmakers/martha_jailjam/index.htm?cnn=yes

Martha to tighten mail mix, expand specialty. (2002, February 25). *Home Textiles Today*, 23, 6. Retrieved April 8, 2008 from ABI/INFORM Global database. (Document ID: 109882067).

Martha's Calendar. (1992, August/September). *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.

Martha's Calendar. (1993, August/September). *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.

Martha's Calendar. (1994a, February/March). *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.

Martha's Calendar. (1994b, June/July). *Martha Stewart Living*, 10.

Martha's calendar. (1994c, November). *Martha Stewart Living*, 4.

Martha's Calendar. (1995a, May). *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.

Martha's Calendar. (1995b, December/January 1996). *Martha Stewart Living*, 4.

Martha's Calendar. (1996a, June). *Martha Stewart Living*, 8.

Martha's Calendar. (1996b, September). *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.

Martha's Calendar. (1998a, February). *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.

Martha's Calendar. (1998b, April). *Martha Stewart Living*, 10.

- Martha's Calendar. (1998c, May). *Martha Stewart Living*, 8.
- Martha's Calendar. (1998d, June). *Martha Stewart Living*, 10.
- Martha's Calendar. (2001a, April). *Martha Stewart Living*, 10.
- Martha's Calendar. (2001b, July). *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.
- Martha's Calendar. (2002a, February). *Martha Stewart Living*, 2.
- Martha's Calendar. (2002b, April). *Martha Stewart Living*, 10.
- Martha's Calendar. (2002c, May). *Martha Stewart Living*, 4.
- Martha's Calendar. (2002d, July). *Martha Stewart Living*, 4.
- Martha's Calendar. (2002e, November). *Martha Stewart Living*, 8.
- Martin, L. & Segrave, K. (1985). *The servant problem: Domestic workers in North America*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.
- Mason, A. & Meyers, M. (2001, December). Living with Martha Stewart media: Chosen domesticity in the experience of fans. *Journal of Communication* 51, 801-823.
- Massachusetts quickfacts from the US Census Bureau. (2004). Retrieved November 7, 2005, from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/25000.html>
- Masters, B. A. (2004, July 17). Martha Stewart sentenced to prison. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved April 28, 2007 from <http://www.washingtonpost.com>
- Matthews, Neal. (2003, January). Road trips. *Martha Stewart Living*, 65-75.
- McCleary, K. (2002, March). Home office tax deductions. *Martha Stewart Living*, 158-160.
- McClellan, S. (1997, January 6). NATPE 1997: Fourth annual exclusive Broadcasting & Cable poll just prior to industry's biggest programming marketplace finds talk shows top buyers' wish lists." *Broadcasting & Cable* 127, 24 (3). Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- McCracken, E. (1993). *Decoding Women's Magazines: From Mademoiselle to Ms.* New York: St. Martin's Press.
- McEvoy, M. (2004, January). Learning calligraphy. *Martha Stewart Living*, 118-123.
- McEwen, C. (1997, September). Buying a car. *Martha Stewart Living*, 92-96.

- McKee, Alan. (2003). *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McLaughlin, Lisa. (1995, May). Feminist communication scholarship and "the woman question" in the Academy. *Communication Theory*, 5, 1 44-161.
- McMullen, T. (2006, May 22). Martha Stewart entertains offers for her Connecticut residence. *Real Estate Journal*. Retrieved July 10, 2007, from <http://www.realestatejournal.com/columnists/private/20060522-private.html>
- McMurdy, D. (2000, December 4). A brand called Martha. *Maclean's*, 113, 49. Retrieved March 20, 2007 from the LexisNexis Academic database.
- McNatt, R. (2004, August 13). Martha's Latest Recipe. *Business Week Online*. Retrieved May 8, 2008 from the General OneFile database.
- McQuail, D. (2005). *McQuail's mass communication theory* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Meyrowitz, J. (1982). Television and interpersonal behavior: Codes of perception and response. In G. Gumpert & R. Cathcart (Eds.), *Inter/Media: Interpersonal Communication in a Mediated World* (2nd ed., pp. 221-241). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Modleski, T. (1982). *Loving with a vengeance: Mass-produced fantasies for women*. Hamden, CT: Archon Books.
- Morley, D. (1992). *Television, audiences and cultural studies*. London: Routledge.
- Morley, D. (2006). Unanswered questions in audience research. *The Communication Review*, 9, 101-121.
- Naughton, K. (2002, June 24). Martha's tabloid dish. *Newsweek*, 139, 36. Retrieved April 22, 2007 from the Academic Search Premier database.
- Naughton, K. & Gimbel, B. (2004, March 15). Martha's fall. *Newsweek*, 163, 28-36.
- Naughton, K. (2006, February 27). Renovating Martha. *Newsweek*, 147, 46.
- Nebens, A. (2004, August). Washing the dog. *Martha Stewart Living*, 70-71.
- Neumeier, S. (1999, April). Easter breads. *Martha Stewart Living*, 112-116.
- Neunsinger, A. (2001, August). Kabob party. *Martha Stewart Living*, 126-133.

- Newens, J. (1996, October 31). Femininity, power, and marriage: The paradox of Martha Stewart. *Bitch, 1*, 10-13.
- News of the Market: First down qtr. At Stewart's Co. since '99. (2003, March 10). *Mediaweek, 13*, 24(2). Retrieved March 21, 2007 from the Communication & Mass Media Complete Database.
- Nichols, J. (2000a, April). Easter baskets. *Martha Stewart Living*, 118-126.
- Nichols, J. (2000b, April). Pom-pom animals. *Martha Stewart Living*, 234-243.
- Nichols, J. (2001a, April). Marshmallow treats. *Martha Stewart Living*, 112-118.
- Nichols, J. (2001b, August). Batik prints. *Martha Stewart Living*, 102-108.
- Nicksin, C. (2002, December). Crafting your own Victorian holiday. *Martha Stewart Living*, 208-217.
- O'Connell, P. (2003, May 19). What the made-for-TV Martha misses. Business Week Online, n.p. Retrieved December 21, 2005 from:
http://www.businessweek.com/bwdaily/dnflash/may2003/nf20030519_7151.htm
- Okrent, R. (2001, April). Fancy eggs. *Martha Stewart Living*, 190-197.
- O'Neill, M. (1999, May 16). But what would Martha say? *The New York Times*, p.145. Retrieved April 13, 2006, from the LexisNexis database.
- Oppenheimer, J. (1997). *Just Desserts: The Unauthorized Biography, Martha Stewart*. New York: Avon Books.
- Oreklin, M. (2005, September 19). 10 questions for Martha Stewart. *Time, 166*, 8.
- Orenstein, P. (2000). *Flux: Women on sex, work, kids, love, and life in a half-changed world*. New York: Doubleday.
- Palmer, P. M. (1989). *Domesticity and dirt: Housewives and domestic servants in the United States, 1920-1945*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Parreñas, R. S. (2001). *Servants of globalization: Women, migration and domestic work*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Peake, G. (1998a, May). Weather 101. *Martha Stewart Living*, 138-145.
- Peake, G. (1998b, April). Bike tune-up. *Martha Stewart Living*, 130-136.

- Peake, G. (1998c, July/August). A vacation checklist. *Martha Stewart Living*, 108-110.
- Peake, G. (1998d/1999, December/January). Polishing floors. *Martha Stewart Living*, 152-154.
- Peake, G. (1999a, April). Easter toys. *Martha Stewart Living*, 138-146.
- Peake, G. (1999b, May). Metal furniture. *Martha Stewart Living*, 198-207.
- Pearson, V. (November, 2000). Thanksgiving in Ojai. *Martha Stewart Living*, 254-261.
- Pederson, M. (1994, December 12). Martha Stewart cross-merchandising. *Publisher's Weekly*, 241, 19. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Penney, C. (1995, May). Golf camp for women. *Martha Stewart Living*, 50-55.
- Perez, C. (1998, November). Perfect piecrust. *Martha Stewart Living*, 108-114.
- Perman, S. (1997, October 6). Attention K Martha shoppers: Martha Stewart can decorate anything, and she rules a \$150 million empire. *Time*, 150, 54(6). Retrieved March 14, 2007 from Thomson Gale database.
- Peters, J. D. (1989). Democracy and American mass communication theory: Dewey, Lippman, Lazarsfeld. *Communication*, 11, 199-220.
- Petrozzello, D. (1997, June 23). Stewart plants future in radio. *Broadcasting and Cable*, 127, 97. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Peyser, M. (2002, July 1). The insiders. *Newsweek*, 140, 38-43.
- Picallo, G. (2005, February 26). Humility, done to perfection. *The Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved July 27, 2008 from <http://articles.latimes.com/2005/feb/26/entertainment/et-martha26>
- Podmolik, M. (1999, October 25). Martha makes her big move. *Advertising Age*, 70, s6-s12. Retrieved April 15, 2007 from the Academic Search Premier database.
- Pogrebin, R. (19998, February 8). Master of her own destiny. *The New York Times*. Retrieved August 3, 2007 from the Lexis-Nexis database.
- Pokorny, R. (2002, August). Packing toiletries for travel. *Martha Stewart Living*, 64.
- Porcelli, L. (2000, December). A traditional Italian Christmas dinner. *Martha Stewart Living*, 242-249.

- Porcelli, L. (2001, November). Thanksgiving open house in Brooklyn. *Martha Stewart Living*, 184-193.
- Porcelli, L. (2002, February). Pâte à choux. *Martha Stewart Living*, 74-76.
- Porcelli, L. (2003, November). Perfect gravy. *Martha Stewart Living*, 88-92.
- Porcelli, L. (2004, September). Flawless soufflés. *Martha Stewart Living*, 56-60.
- Prisant, C. (1997, April). Wedgwood. *Martha Stewart Living*, 134-139.
- Prisant, C. (2002, October). Decorating with birdcages. *Martha Stewart Living*, 228-239.
- Prisant, C. (2004, April). An egg hunt for grown-ups. *Martha Stewart Living*, 72-76.
- Program guide. (1998, June). *Martha Stewart Living*, 34-43.
- Quinn, J. (1999, March 8). Martha moves books. *Publishers Weekly*, 246, 26.
Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Rakow, L. F. (1986, Autumn). Rethinking gender research in communication. *Journal of Communication*, 36, 11-26.
- Radway, J. (1984). *Reading the romance: Women, patriarchy, and popular literature*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Radway, J. (1986). Identifying ideological seams: Mass culture, analytical method, and political practice. *Communication*, 9, 93-123.
- Radway, J. (1998). Gender in the field of ideological production: Feminist cultural studies, the problem of the political subject, and the aims of knowledge production. In The Department of Gender Studies, Linköping University (Ed.), *New perspectives in gender studies: Research in the fields of economics, culture and life sciences* (pp. 37-59). Linköping, Sweden: Nova Print/
- Raisfeld, A. (1992, February/March). Romantic dinner. *Martha Stewart Living*, 50-57.
- Read, M. (1998, July/August). Milk glass. *Martha Stewart Living*, 114-119.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). The principles of feminist research: A matter of debate. In C. Kramarae & D. Spender (Eds.), *The knowledge explosion: generations of feminist scholarship* (pp. 423-437). New York and London: Teachers College Press.
- Riegler, S. (2000, September). All in the details. *Martha Stewart Living*, 256-267.
- Roach, M. (1994, August). The ultimate rose garden. *Martha Stewart Living*, 46-53.

- Roach, M. (2004, February). Mother knows best. *Martha Stewart Living*, 92-99.
- Rollins, Judith (1985). *Between women: domestics and their employers*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.
- Romero, Mary. (1992). *Maid in the U.S.A.* New York: Routledge.
- Rose, C. (Executive Producer). (1999, October 19). The Charlie Rose show [Television broadcast]. New York: WNET Educational Broadcasting Company.
- Rubin, A. M., Perse, E. M., & R. A. Powell. (1985, Winter). Loneliness, parasocial interaction and local television news viewing. *Human Communication Research*, 12, 155-180.
- Rubin, A. M. & R. B. Rubin. (2001). Interface of personal and mediated communication: Fifteen years later. *The Electronic Journal of Communication*, 11, Retrieved May 31, 2007 from <http://www.cios.org/www/ejcmmain.htm>
- Russell, J. S. (2000, November). Building an outdoor fireplace. *Martha Stewart Living*, 172-176.
- Rutherford, J. W. (2003). *Selling Mrs. Consumer: Christine Frederick & the rise of household efficiency*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press.
- Salads. (1991, Spring). *Martha Stewart Living*, 60-69.
- Saving old books. (1993, April/May). *Martha Stewart Living*, 38-41.
- Scanlon, J. (1995). *Inarticulate Longings: The Ladies' Home Journal, Gender, and the Promises of Consumer Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Schatz, R. D. (2002, August). Can you afford a second home? *Martha Stewart Living*, 104-106.
- Schlosser, J. (1998, October 19). More Martha for fall; Dr. Joy Browne is in. *Broadcasting & Cable*, 10. Retrieved May 10, 1999 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- Schor, J. (2003). The new politics of consumption. In G. Dines & J. M. Humez (Eds.), *Gender, race, and class in media: A text-reader* (2nd ed., pp. 183-194). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Schrager, V. (1993, October/November). Setting the table. *Martha Stewart Living*, 30-34.
- Schrager, V. (1996, July/August). Refrigeratorware. *Martha Stewart Living*, 60-68.

- Schultz, W. (2002, October). Road trips. *Martha Stewart Living*, 193-203.
- Schwarzbaum, L. (2002, April 26). Filth and fury. *Entertainment Weekly*, 650, 137.
- Scott, J. W. (1992). Experience. In J. Butler & J. W. Scott (Eds.), *Feminists theorize the political* (pp. 22-40). New York: Routledge.
- Sellers, P. (2004, October 4). Why Martha really chose jail. *Fortune*, 34.
- Sellers, P. (2005, November 14). Remodeling Martha. *Fortune*, 101-122.
- Shaw, D. (1991, November/December). Holiday harvest. *Martha Stewart Living*, 104-113.
- Shaw, N. (2003, Winter). Cloning scapegoats: Martha Stewart does insider trading. *Social Text* 77, 21, 51-67.
- Shields, S. A. (2008, September). Gender: An intersectionality perspective. *Sex Roles*, 59, 301-311.
- Silverman, D. (2001). *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Skylands dinner party. (2001, July). *Martha Stewart Living*, 126-135.
- Slack, J. D. (1996). The theory and method of articulation in cultural studies. In D. Morley & K. Chen (Eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies* (pp. 112-127). London: Routledge.
- Smith, C. D. (2000, Fall). Discipline—it's a "good thing": Rhetorical constitution and Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 23, 337-366.
- Smith, D. (1992, April/May). Homemade bonnets. *Martha Stewart Living*, 62-65.
- Sorkin, A. R. (2003, June 5). Despite shuffle, Stewart is still in charge. *The New York Times*. Retrieved June 5, 2003 from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Spring cleaning checklist. (2002, May). *Martha Stewart Living*, 30.
- Spring, J. (1993, October/November). Stocking a pantry. *Martha Stewart Living*, 66-72.
- Spungen, S. (1995, June). The perfect burger. *Martha Stewart Living*, 84-87.
- Spungen, S. (2001, February). Brioche. *Martha Stewart Living*, 150-155.

- Stabile, C. (2004). Getting what she deserved: The news media, Martha Stewart, and masculine domination. *Feminist Media Studies*, 4, 315-332.
- Stanley, A. & Hays, C. L. (2002, June 23). Martha Stewart's latest to-do list may include some image polishing. *The New York Times*, pp. 1, 24.
- Stanley, A. (2005, September 22). Yes, Martha fires someone, but the pink slip is scented. *The New York Times*. Retrieved September 22, 2005 from <http://nytimes.com>
- Stewart, M, with E. Hawes. (1982). *Entertaining*. New York, Clarkson Potter.
- Stewart, M. (1990, Winter). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 126.
- Stewart, M. (1991a, September/October). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 4.
- Stewart, M. (1991b, November/December). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 142.
- Stewart, M. (1992a, June/July). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 4.
- Stewart, M. (1992b, April/May). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 128.
- Stewart, M. (1992c, October/November). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 135.
- Stewart, M. (1992d, December/January 1993). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 119.
- Stewart, M. (1993, February/March). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 124.
- Stewart, M. (1994a, February/March). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 136.
- Stewart, M. (1994b, August). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 112.
- Stewart, M. (1994c, September). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 112.
- Stewart, M. (1994d, November). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.
- Stewart, M. (1994e, December/January 1995). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 140.
- Stewart, M. (1995a, February). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.
- Stewart, M. (1995b, March). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 134.
- Stewart, M. (1995c, April). "A letter from Martha." *Martha Stewart Living*, 8.

- Stewart, M. (1995d, April). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 144.
- Stewart, M. (1995e, May). "Remembering." *Martha Stewart Living*, 128.
- Stewart, M. (1995f, June). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.
- Stewart, M. (1995g, July/August). "A letter from Martha." *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.
- Stewart, M. (1995h, July/August). "Remembering." *Martha Stewart Living*, 112.
- Stewart, M. (1995i, October). "A letter from Martha." *Martha Stewart Living*, 8.
- Stewart, M. (1995j, December/January 1996). "Remembering." *Martha Stewart Living*, 156.
- Stewart, M. (1996a, April). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 10.
- Stewart, M. (1996b, May). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 12.
- Stewart, M. (1996c, June). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 156.
- Stewart, M. (1996d, July/August). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 10.
- Stewart, M. (1996e, December/January 1997). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 212.
- Stewart, M. (1997a, February). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 8.
- Stewart, M. (1997b, April). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 12.
- Stewart, M. (1997c, April). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 192.
- Stewart, M. (1997d, May). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 188.
- Stewart, M. (1997e, September). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 12.
- Stewart, M. (1997f, September). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 216.
- Stewart, M. (1997g, November). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 18.
- Stewart, M. (1997h, December). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 256.
- Stewart, M. (1998a, April). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 16.
- Stewart, M. (1998b, June). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 14.

Stewart, M. (1998c, May). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 14.

Stewart, M. (1998d, May). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 224.

Stewart, M. (1998e, September). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 16.

Stewart, M. (1998f, October). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 272.

Stewart, M. (1998g, November). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 288.

Stewart, M. (1998h, December/January 1999). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 288.

Stewart, M. (1999a, February). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 14.

Stewart, M. (1999b, April). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 284.

Stewart, M. (1999c, July/August). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 14.

Stewart, M. (1999d, September). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 296.

Stewart, M. (1999e, September). Turkey Hill yesterday and today. *Martha Stewart Living*, 206-217.

Stewart, M. (1999f, October). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 300.

Stewart, M. (1999g, October). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 24.

Stewart, M. (2000a, May). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 276.

Stewart, M. (2000b, September). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 22.

Stewart, M. (2000c, November). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 12.

Stewart, M. (2000d, December). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 340.

Stewart, M. (2001a, January). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 196.

Stewart, M. (2001b, July). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 196.

Stewart, M. (2001c, September). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 280.

Stewart, M. (2001d, December). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 12.

Stewart, M. (2001e, December). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 272.

- Stewart, M. (2002a, February). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 224.
- Stewart, M. (2002b, April). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 14.
- Stewart, M. (2002c April). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 300.
- Stewart, M. (2002d, August). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 224.
- Stewart, M. (2002e, September). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 312.
- Stewart, M. (2002f, December). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 8.
- Stewart, M. (2003a, April). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 220.
- Stewart, M. (2003b, September). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 8.
- Stewart, M. (2003c, December). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 222.
- Stewart, M. (2004a, February). A letter from Martha. *Martha Stewart Living*, 6.
- Stewart, M. (2004b, May). Remembering. *Martha Stewart Living*, 160.
- Stewart, M. (2004c, October). An open letter from Martha Stewart. *MarthaTalks.com*. Retrieved October 20, 2004 from <http://marthataalks.com>
- Stewart, M. (2005, April). From my home to yours. *Martha Stewart Living*, 32-36.
- Stoller, D. (2001, Spring). Editor's Letter. *Bust*, 17, 4.
- Sunday lunch. (1993, February/March). *Martha Stewart Living*, 66-73.
- Sutherland, D. E. (1981). *Americans and their servants: Domestic service in the United States from 1800 to 1920*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.
- Talbot, M. (1996, May 13). Les tres riches heures de Martha Stewart. *The New Republic*, 214, 30-35. Retrieved March 29, 2007, from ProQuest database.
- Television guide. (2002, October). *Martha Stewart Living*, 205-214.
- Television program guide. (1994, February/March). *Martha Stewart Living*, 122-131.
- Thanksgiving Day planner. (2002, November). *Martha Stewart Living*, 51-52.
- The Easter hunt. (1991, Spring). *Martha Stewart Living*, 48-55.
- The new establishment. (2000, October). *Vanity Fair*, 482, 269(21).

- Toobin, J. (2003, February 3). Lunch at Martha's. *The New Yorker*, 78 38-44.
- Trucco, T. (1998a, February). Mah Jongg. *Martha Stewart Living*, pp. 94-100.
- Trucco, T. (1998b, February). Pyrex. *Martha Stewart Living*, pp. 84-90.
- Trucco, T. (1999, May). Pot holders. *Martha Stewart Living*, 176-181.
- Tulloch, J. & Jenkins, H. (1995). *Science fiction audiences: watching Doctor Who and Star Trek*. New York: Routledge.
- Tung, J. (1997, October). Shadow boxes. *Martha Stewart Living*, 110-118.
- Tyrnauer, M. (2001, September). Empire by Martha. *Vanity Fair*, 364-402.
- Tyrnauer, M. (2005, August). The prisoner of Bedford. *Vanity Fair*, 110-118+.
- Vejnoska, J. (2003, May 30). A second helping of "Martha." *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, p. 1F. Retrieved April 25, 2007 from the LexisNexis Academic database.
- Wahlgren, E. (2002, March 26). Martha's newly fashionable stock. *Business Week Online*. Retrieved April 22, 2007 from the Business Source Premier database.
- Wajda, S. T. (2001, Summer). Kmartha. *American Studies*, 42, 71-88.
- Wallis, L. (2000, November). Ironing a tablecloth. *Martha Stewart Living*, 192-200.
- Wallis, L. (2001a, November). From china cabinet to bar. *Martha Stewart Living*, 158-162.
- Wallis, L. (2001b, November). Red. *Martha Stewart Living*, 226-233.
- Webly, L. (1997, November). Knitting 101. *Martha Stewart Living*, 162-170.
- Weisman, M. A. (1998, April). Dyeing eggs naturally. *Martha Stewart Living*, 178-181.
- Weiss, J. (2005, September 22). Martha's 'Apprentice' is fun but frosty. *The Boston Globe*. Retrieved September 22, 2005 from <http://www.boston.com>
- Wells, M. (2001, March 19). Overcooked. *Forbes*, 167, 176. Retrieved April 8, 2007 from the Expanded Academic ASAP database.
- What to have for dinner. (1991, Spring). *Martha Stewart Living*, 120.

- White, M. (1992). Ideological analysis and television. In, R. C. Allen (Ed.), *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled: Television and Contemporary Criticism* (pp. 161-202). Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Whiteside, K. (1992, April/May). Tulips. *Martha Stewart Living*, 104-111.
- Whiteside, K. (1993, September/October). Growing tomatoes. *Martha Stewart Living*, 34-40.
- Willdorf, N. (2002, May 23). The divine Ms. M? *Boston Phoenix*. Retrieved October 7, 2002, from <http://www.alternet.org>
- Williams, R. (1961). *The long revolution*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Williams, S. (1999, October). How do you store it? *Martha Stewart Living*, 144-154.
- Williams, S. (2000, April). Sanding. *Martha Stewart Living*, 146-152.
- Winter wedding. (1991, November/December). *Martha Stewart Living*, 56-67.
- Wolff, J. (1991, July/August). Sailing away. *Martha Stewart Living*, 38-39.
- Women's Studies Group, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1978). *Women take issue: Aspects of women's subordination*. London: Hutchinson.
- Workbook. (2003a, May). *Martha Stewart Living*, 182-184.
- Workbook. (2003a, September). *Martha Stewart Living*, 202.
- Workbook. (2004, January). *Martha Stewart Living*, 134.
- Working. (1990, Winter). *Martha Stewart Living*, 28-30.
- Working. (1992, February/March). *Martha Stewart Living*, 36-39.
- Wreaths to circle your home. (1990, Winter). *Martha Stewart Living*, 90-97.
- Wright, J. (1993, December/January 1994). Hotel silver. *Martha Stewart Living*, 58-62.
- Wong, B. (2004, July). New jobs for old-fashioned jelly jars. *Martha Stewart Living*, 60-65.